

A high-contrast, black and white photograph showing a group of people in the foreground, some with their faces obscured by dark shapes, looking towards a large, multi-story building in the background. The image is grainy and has a stark, dramatic quality.

ANTI-SETTLEMENT PROTEST: Young Palestinian girls chant during a demonstration at Erez in Gaza Strip Tuesday. The protest was in reaction to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announcing that Israel did not intend to change its policy on Jewish settlement (Reuters photo)

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Gulf Arab states are chalking out a joint strategy to cut their large foreign workforce and ensure jobs for their swelling native population, officials and newspapers said Tuesday.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states set up a special committee last month to draw up guidelines for the strategy, which will be discussed by their planning ministry undersecretaries on Oct. 15.

"The undersecretaries will present a report on the strategy to their ministers," the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Bayan said.

"The strategy will focus on the achievement of demographic balance and replacement of the expatriate labour by the national workforce to ensure jobs for nationals in productive sectors," it said.

Officials at the Riyadh-based GCC secretariat said a memorandum outlining such a blueprint had been distributed to regional governments, stressing the need for a strategy to redress the demographic imbalance.

Foreigners, mainly Asians, constitute a majority in such GCC members as Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE and account for nearly 90 per cent of the jobs.

Although their ratio is far less in the other member states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman — they remain a sizeable workforce.

Independent estimates show that expatriates in the GCC exceeded eight million at the end of 1996, accounting for nearly a third of the total population.

Foreigners began streaming into the desert region to the early 1960s, when Gulf states launched a huge drive to build their infrastructure using petrodollars.

The GCC, a loose economic, political and defence alliance created in 1981, controls around 43 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves and nearly one fifth of the global gas wealth.

The six states do not impose income taxes and their per capita income ranks among the highest in the world. In Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE, the level exceeds \$15,000.

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The attack is "an interference in the Kingdom's internal affairs and as such it is unacceptable," the two-page statement said.

"We express our fear and deep concern that the article in Jordan's security cooperation, agreement with Israel which included in the peace treaty... would be used to hunt down Palestinian freedom fighters outside the frontier of Palestine," the statement said.

"We call upon the government to recall the Jordanian ambassador (in Tel Aviv) as a protest over the attack," said the statement, which was signed by Islamist, Pan-Arabist and leftist parties.

There were reports on Tuesday that the legal case that Mr. Rashid mentioned was being handled by Attorney General Imad Kilani at the Criminal Court.

Sources close to the case told the Jordan Times that Mr. Kilani has interviewed Mr. Misha'al's bodyguard and heard his testimony.

The attorney general also interviewed the doctors treating Hamas leader. The doctors told him that Mr. Misha'al was not in a condition which allows him to give a testimony, the sources said.

Mohammed Nazal, member of the Hamas politburo, told Agence France Presse that the group has information "that contacts were taking place between the Israeli and Jordanian government over the affair."

The agency quoted Western diplomats in Amman as saying that Jordan had proof of the Mossad's involvement in the attack, which came three days after two Israeli embassy security officials were shot at in the capital. Hamas denied it was involved in the attack against the Israelis.

"The Jordanian authorities have warned the Jewish state against such terrorist acts in Jordan and demanded the Israelis identify the chemical material introduced into Misha'al's body and the means to treat it," one diplomat said.

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Iran if European governments agree to tighten their approach to Iran.

The administration is seeking "greater concerted action" with European governments on how to deal effectively with Tehran, State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

"The purpose of this law is to get other governments in work with us to put pressure on Iran," Mr. Rubin said.

"Any action in that regard would have an effect on our national interest and how we might interpret the law," he said.

France sought on Tuesday to deflect the row by insisting it was a private deal that respected international law.

"It is not a matter for governments... it is a commercial contract between companies," Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt said, adding he saw no reason why it should strain Franco-U.S. ties.

"It is not a contract which must be authorised, forbidden or allowed by the french administration," he told a news briefing.

Total said on Sunday it had signed a \$2 billion contract to develop the giant South Pars offshore gas field in Iran, defying U.S. laws meant to deter investment in Iran, Libya and Cuba as states that sponsor "terrorism."

France's Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin on Monday threw the government's backing behind Total, saying the U.S. law named after Senator Alfonse D'Ama-

to could not apply to foreign companies.

The deal, including Malaysia's Petronas and Russia's Gazprom as junior partners, was the biggest foreign investment in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

President Bill Clinton's administration has said that the act, which calls for penalties against companies investing more than \$20 million in energy projects in Iran or Libya, will be enforced.

Mr. Rummelhardt, asked what Europe might do if the U.S. went ahead and imposed sanctions, said: "We are talking about it."

In Tokyo, the president of Petronas said that U.S. sanctions against companies investing in Iran were "unfair" but would not affect Petronas' participation in the Iran contract.

"We will respect United Nations sanctions but the sanctions against Iran by the U.S. we consider unfair," he told an energy seminar in Tokyo.

Mr. Rummelhardt said there had been contacts at all levels of government between the U.S. and France before the contract was signed but denied reports of a formal U.S. protest to Paris last week. "I don't see why there is reason to protest when it is a private contract," he said. Recent Franco-U.S. talks have included meetings between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine in New York.

Even though France insisted the contract was a private issue, Total consulted the government before signing.

Mr. Rummelhardt said the advice given was "not a green light. It was a confirmation that it violated nothing in French or international law."

He added that France hopes its relations with the U.S. would not be damaged by the dispute. "We hope that nothing is going to undermine the traditional climate of confidence between France and the United States," he said.

France is often one of Washington's most fractious allies with disputes over issues ranging from NATO reform to Africa.

Mr. Jospin said on Monday that he was pleased with Total's deal and that times were changing in Iran with the election of its new president, Mohammad Khatami. "No one accepts the idea that the United States can now impose their laws on the rest of the world," he said.

France and its partners in the European Union have opposed the U.S. laws since the start, saying the U.S. has no right to impose policy on foreign companies just because American firms are barred by U.S. law from competing for contracts.

U.S. officials argue that Iran uses its oil and gas revenue to sponsor "terrorist" organisations and try to buy weapons of mass destruction.

But one American oil industry expert predicted that Washington would not risk the dispute escalating into a major trade war. "Basically the French are calling the Americans' bluff on this," he said.

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residents as bombers who blew themselves up in attacks in Jerusalem on July 30 and September 4, killing a total 20 Israelis.

"This closure is completely unjustified. It does nothing but

cause innocent people to suffer," said Amin Maqbul, the local leader of the leading PLO faction Fatah.

Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, some 150 school children held a demonstration on the Palestinian side of the Erez Crossing into Israel to protest

Israeli settlement policies.

The children waved signs reading, "No Peace with Settlement." and shouted slogans against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to expand a Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

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at a Hamas factory in the West Bank town of Beit Sahour. The Israeli official said. The factory was discovered in July when explosives went off inadvertently, killing a Palestinian man. Awadallah was described by Israeli officials as the next "engineer," a nickname that had been given to chief Hamas bombmaker Yahya Ayyash who was killed in January 1996 in an operation widely attributed to Israel. Ayyash had assembled explosives for several Hamas bombings. Awadallah received the go-ahead for carrying out the Jerusalem attacks from Hamas leaders based in Damascus, Syria, the Israeli official said.

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forces to the frontline with the Kurdish area.

The INC is an umbrella organisation of several Arab, Kurdish and Turcoman groups opposed to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's regime.

The latest fighting between Turkey and the PKK on Iraqi soil also coincided with Iranian air attacks. On Monday, Iranian warplanes raided two border provinces to target bases of the Iranian opposition in Iraq, Baghdad said. A military spokesman in Iran confirmed one base of the People's Mujahadeen was attacked.

Iraq has condemned both Turkish and Iranian operations.

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Agreement signed to modernise radar equipment at Queen Alia Airport

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the French firm Thompson Tuesday signed an agreement on modernising the radar control centre at the Queen Alia International Airport.

CAA Director Jasser Ziyad said the agreement, which is to be financed through the 1996 French-Jordanian Aid Protocol, is an extension of a bilateral agreement that was assigned to the same French firm to carry out in 1995.

The one-year, JD2 million agreement entails providing more modern radar screens that can cover a 250-mile radius, thereby providing more detailed information and data to enable air traffic controllers to better control air traffic, said Captain Ziyad.

Capt. Ziyad, who signed the contract with a representative of the French firm in the pres-



CAA Director Jasser Ziyad Tuesday signs an agreement with a representative from the French firm Thompson on modernising the radar equipment at Queen Alia International Airport (Petra photo)

ence of French ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajelet, said the new

facilities will help prevent mid-air collisions, and added that CAA's

staff are quite capable of handling the new equipment.

Voter cards complete preparations for upcoming elections — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Interior has finalised preparations for the Nov. 4 general elections and intends to distribute voter cards to the public Saturday, Minister of Interior Nuhair Rashid said in the local press Tuesday.

Al Ra'i Arabic daily quoted the minister as saying the coming elections will be fair and free and all possible measures will be taken to enable the people to exercise their constitutional rights.

Two million voter cards have been sent to voting centres prior to their distribution to the public, he

said. The nomination of candidates running in the elections will start Friday, Oct. 10 and will last for three days, in accordance with the law, he said.

However, informal nominations have been going on among the tribes and clans in different governorates, he added.

Meanwhile, former prime minister and deputy in the 12th Parliament Taher Masri has proposed that the Ministry of Interior divide the country into 50 districts from the present 21, and that the number of deputies to serve in the upcoming

13th Parliament be raised from 80 to 100 to ensure fairer representation.

Mr. Masri was addressing a seminar held Sunday at the Professional Associations Complex, which was attended by prominent personalities representing former deputies, political parties, and professional unions.

He also suggested that each citizen, upon reaching the age of 18, be automatically registered as a voter, based on information from the civil status and registration department.

Mr. Masri demanded that the government scrap the

present one-person, one-vote election system, because he said this law has transformed tribes into political entities.

He explained that the country needs a more modern and more balanced election law that will enhance cohesion in the social fabric.

Isaiah Khairi, head of the professional unions freedoms committee, said the unions have decided to boycott the upcoming elections in protest against the one-person, one-vote election system, which he said is considered by the unions as ruinous to national unity.

Jordanian-Iranian joint committee opens two-day meeting in Tehran

TEHRAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Iranian Joint Committee opened a two-day meeting in Tehran Tuesday to discuss industrial, economic, and trade cooperation and the prospect of launching joint economic ventures.

The meeting resulted in the conclusion of a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding, which will pave the way for promoting bilateral ties and increasing the volume of goods exchanged.

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki is co-chairing the

committee meeting, along with his Iranian counterpart Gholam Rida Shafi'i.

In an address at the opening session, Dr. Mulki said Jordan was keen on promoting cooperation with Iran in trade, industry, joint investments, land, sea, and air transport, culture, education, and tourism.

Jordan is seeking an executive programme and an appropriate mechanism agreed upon by the two parties to help them boost their collaboration in different domains and to serve as a model for other Islamic countries, he added.

The minister called on the business communities in Jordan and Iran to take the initiative in strengthening bilateral cooperation.

Also attending the meeting were Haidar Murad, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Trade, Khalid Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, representatives of the Arab Potash Company, and other Jordanian government officials and businessmen.

A previous joint Iranian-Jordanian technical committee paved the way for

this meeting.

Also Tuesday, Dr. Mulki and the Jordanian delegation met with Ali Khamushi, chairman of the Iranian chambers of industry and trade and mines, and concluded a protocol on joint cooperation and an agreement on the establishment of a 10-member Jordan-Iran business council to enhance bilateral cooperation in economic and trade fields.

The council is to hold annual meetings alternately in Amman and Tehran.

Truck accident leaves 1 dead, 4 injured

Juvenile burglars apprehended in Irbid

MAFRAQ (J.T.) — One person was killed and four others injured Tuesday in a road accident involving collisions between five fuel oil trucks in the Safawi area on the road between Amman and Iraq.

A spokesman for the Civil Defence Department here said the accident was caused by incorrect passing procedures among the trucks, resulting in a crash and explosion.

One driver, Mohammad Falah, died in the accident. The spokesman said the

other four drivers were rushed to Safawi Health Centre for treatment.

According to the spokesman, the injured were drivers Sagri Suleiman, Ibrahim Saliba Janil, Mahmoud Hamad Obeidat, and Haidam Abu Samah.

Last Sunday, the Public Security Department (PSD) urged motorists in Jordan to examine their vehicles and take extra safety precautions in preparation for the winter season.

The call came following

reports of the deaths of eight people and the injury of 100 others in 146 road accidents, all blamed on slippery roads following light showers that fell Sunday morning.

Meanwhile in Irbid, police announced Tuesday that they apprehended three youths who were said to have burglarised several homes and stores in Irbid city, northern Jordan.

Irbid police chief Colonel Abdul Salaam Jaafreh said two of the suspected gang were caught trying to bur-

gle a house at night.

He added that they were juvenile delinquents who were interned at a juvenile centre, but at the time they were allowed to take a leave, during which they committed burglaries.

He said the two youths confessed that they were committing robberies with the help of a third juvenile delinquent.

Altogether, he added, they admitted to committing 15 thefts during leaves from the centre.

Quilt exhibition explores tradition, styles of old craft

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Piecing it together," a quilt exhibition exploring traditions and culture through colour, pattern, fabric, and technique, opened Tuesday at the American Centre at the U.S. embassy.

The exhibition represents American artist Virginia Harris' search for cultural and traditional roots and self-determination.

"For years I searched for a creative outlet that engendered the passion of which artists speak," Ms. Harris

said.

Photography offered glimpses of this passion in the 70s, and writing did the same in the 80s, she added.

In 1991, a friend asked us to make a quilt square for her fiftieth birthday and this experience changed how I related to the world," she explained.

"Through piecing together varied colours, shapes and fabrics, the diversity of who I am becomes apparent," Ms. Harris added.

"I explore the content and substance of the aspects of difference through line, form and shape," she said.

Ms. Harris said her quilts are inspired by designs from many sources, including traditional African designs, origami and Japanese traditions, nature, and her own vision.

Quilting is an early American colonial tradition of using scraps of fabric to construct warm bed coverings.

Often scraps of clothing, flour sacks or bed linens were used out of necessity.

The quilting tradition became more artistic and less utilitarian with time, and quilts were often made in celebration of weddings,

births and special occasions.

The exhibition, consisting of eight quilts inspired by designs from a variety of sources, is held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Rania Al Abdullah and will be on display until October 20.

Ms. Harris is visiting Jordan for the first time and conducted a workshop entitled "Designing Quilt Blocks from Origami," at the Jordan River Design Centre on September 28.

The New Londonbeat to rock Amman

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The New Londonbeat, the mega-hit making British pop band, is coming to Amman on the invitation of Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped, and will perform at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) on Friday, Oct. 2 and at the Hard Rock Café on Saturday, Oct. 3.

The first concert will be in open air, at the large parking lot of the RCC and the second will be a dinner-concert. Both events are held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Ra'ed Bin Zeid, with all proceeds going to Al Hussein Society.

In a musical landscape where technology is doing most of the work and beautiful melodies are becoming an endangered species, the New Londonbeat certainly brings a fresh breeze.

With finely crafted songs, solid vocal constructions, attractive melody lines, and first class productions, the band firmly sits at the top of the genre.

In many ways, Jimmy Helms, Charles Pierre, and Tommy Blaze are three exceptional talents. Their Number One song "I've Been Thinking About You" topped the charts in 27 countries back in 1991.



For the accomplished musicians they are however, this was only the beginning.

Jimmy, Charles, and Tommy keep the flow of inspiration uninterrupted, pursuing brilliant careers as songwriters and producers, working with fellow artists and superstars like Michael Bolton, Baby Face, and Céline Dion.

Listening to their new album, "D'Regulate," or, to excerpts from their recent live performances in the U.K., is believing how good their

music sounds. Like all modern bands The New Londonbeat uses technology but in a smarter way than those who do pure mechanical, techno dance tracks.

Their dance rhythms are irresistible and have little to do with robotically pre-programmed loops. Before all, the New Londonbeat sounds musical.

The fantastic tonal quality of the voice of lead singer Jimmy Helms, added to his very real singing skills, help give the

New Londonbeat a strong musical personality. It is only fair to mention the human qualities of the three musicians, who are known, for example, to intentionally exclude offensive lyrics from their songs.

In spite of their busy schedule in Europe, they have spontaneously accepted to come and perform in Jordan for the benefit of Al Hussein Society. Lovers of quality pop music in Jordan can expect a truly unforgettable performance.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* "Le Beau Serge" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:30 p.m.
* Children's film: "Spot" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Russia and the Countries of Islam" by Anatoli Gromyko, president of the Policy Evaluation Centre at the Russian Academy of Sciences, at the World Affairs Council, Fourth Circle, at 6:00 p.m. (Tel. 6427061).
* "Villages of the Karak Plateau" by Ali-

son McQuitty, director of the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History, at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 6966821).

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER '97 FESTIVAL

* Graphics by Rafa Nasiri of Iraq, Ziad Dalloul of Syria, and Najia Mehadij at the South Hall.
* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Qailoka at the Middle Hall.
* Sculpture, drawings, and paintings by Jordanian artist Rajwa Ali.
* Works by contemporary Arab artists at the Blue House.
* Paintings by children of Zarga reflecting on the problem of pollution at the Byzantine church.

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition by Catalan masters of the 20th century entitled "Aurea Mediterrània" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 28 (except Tuesdays).
* Quilt exhibition "Piecing It Together" by Ms. Virginia Harris at the American Center, Abdoun, until Oct. 20.
* Paintings by Fuima El-Helou at Institut Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Oct. 4.
* "The Projects of the Essence: Aspects of Italian Painting in the 90s" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 2.
* Works by Khleef Mahmoud Khleef at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 2 (Tel. 5536098).
* Paintings by Palestinian artists entitled: "Palestine the Reality and the Dream" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 2 (except Tuesdays).

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Upgrading Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in Jordan to meet international standards will not be an easy undertaking but a necessary one if the Kingdom hopes to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), according to a wide-range of officials and businesspeople.

Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Secretary General Mohammad Halaqia told the Jordan Times that he has no specific date for the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), which address all aspects of IPRs.

"We are in the process of rectifying the laws to meet international standards, and I cannot give a set date as to when these laws will be enforced," Mr. Halaqia said.

Meeting the provisions of TRIPs has sparked different reactions in Jordan. Some are optimistic about its implications and future importance, while others are apprehensive and even suspicious of the outcomes it will bring.

If it meets the terms of TRIPs, the country will be able to join the WTO, which could be viewed as an advantage on its own.

According to William Douglas Newkirk, international trade negotiator and director of U.S. policy for the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), joining WTO has many benefits.

Speaking at the American Centre Monday evening on advantages of WTO membership, Mr. Newkirk cited, as examples, an increase in cooperation between government and private sectors, a decrease in costs of trading goods both for import and export, which results in an increase in trade, an improvement in the investment climate, and protection from discrimination against a country's exports.

"A total of 113 countries saw there are more advantages than disadvantages to joining the WTO, and 29 more countries are lined up, so there obviously must be something there for all these countries to seek WTO membership," Mr. Newkirk said.

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, president of the Arab Society for the Protection of Intellectual Property (ASPIP), said there is need for a protective environment to encourage people to be creative.

"Eighty-seven per cent of inventions in the world are owned by the G-7 countries, where they enjoy the highest level of protection," Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh said.

Some of the positive aspects that TRIPs provides for a country is protection for domestic inventions and creations as well as an increase in technology and investment.

"Our objective is to create a protected environment in order to encourage national creativity, technological transfer, and investment," Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh said.

Mr. Halaqia said investors will not come to Jordan as long as there is piracy, to

which an adoption of the TRIPs agreement will put an end.

"We need to develop the atmosphere to attract more investment in the country, and this has to be carried out with the government's assistance," he explained.

Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh said implementation of TRIPs will replace pirated products with the first class, original products that the consumer deserves.

"We should not protect the pirate against the interest of the public, the consumer, and the creator," he said.

On the other hand, there are some downsides to the implementation of this agreement, say some store owners and employees. Among the businesses that will be most affected by the execution of the agreement are those related to video, music, computer software, and pharmaceuticals.

One of the immediate outcomes that will result from the implementation is a noticeable increase in price, which will affect those in the business, as well as the customers.

Ziad Zuaier, owner and manager of Video House, one of the largest video rental stores in Jordan, said the execution will have an effect on his business.

"Rental fees will double at the least, and new releases will take much longer to get to the country," Mr. Zuaier said.

He said his business will not be as severely affected as other video rental stores, because he has a large selection of original films,

while other stores do not.

Firas Afghani, an official at Music Box, the largest record store in the country, said his enterprise will also be affected. He said if the implementation takes place, prices of cassettes will rise from JD2 and JD2.5 to at least JD5.

This, he said, will affect the sales percentage, which will ultimately affect the business percentage of profit.

"We should not be compared to England or Saudi Arabia, who can probably afford to buy original products, because the average income of people living in these countries is much higher than the average income of our people," Mr. Afghani said.

He said he feared that an incomplete enforcement of the implementation of TRIPs might lead to a monopoly that will stage unfair competition in the market.

"It is fine with me if a law needs to exist, as long as the law is enforced on [all parties] equally," Mr. Afghani said.

Asked if Jordan can afford the implementation of TRIPs, Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh responded "we have no choice but to afford it."

Otherwise, he added, the Kingdom will become an "outcast" country.

"There is no doubt that the agreement has lots of advantages and disadvantages. But it is destiny and we can't avoid that," Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh said.

But we can work on getting the best out of it, he concluded.

Afghan Taleban offer escape route to northern opponents

KABUL (AFP) — Taleban forces battling for control of the northern Afghan opposition stronghold of Mazar-e-Sharif have offered enemy fighters safe passage out of the city, an official said Tuesday.

The militia's minister for information and culture, Amir Khan Muttaqi, said the besieging army had deliberately left open the southern exit of the city to facilitate a peaceful takeover.

"We are trying to further tighten our net so the opposition are compelled to leave," Mr. Muttaqi said.

"They can escape south to Bamian through Dar-e-Suf without problems."

Late Monday Taleban forces were reported to be a

mere five kilometres to the east of the city and the sound of light machine gun fire was also audible to the north and west.

However, no independent information was immediately available on Tuesday's military developments in Mazar-e-Sharif, which is also the only Afghan city not held by the hardline Taleban.

Mr. Muttaqi asserted that Taleban fighters were now "digging in" in their current positions, although he could not give exact details on the location.

He said the gains were made following a massive late-Monday afternoon Taleban attack on the opposition's seat of shadow government, and the forces

were now attempting to make "gradual advances."

According to independent sources, Monday evening saw a "constant barrage" of rocket and artillery fire on the city centre, amid fighting described as the heaviest since the Taleban attack began more than three weeks ago.

The Taleban launched an attack on the east of Mazar-e-Sharif — situated 310 kilometres north of Kabul — from a pocket of territory they have held since they were beaten out of the northern stronghold in May.

Military sources say the militia are showing a reluctance to rush into the city, due to their memories of being trapped by bloody street battles only four

months ago.

To the west of the city, the militia have gained support from local commanders of the Hezb-e-Islami faction, which like the Taleban is dominated by ethnic-Pashtuns.

Anti-Taleban forces include the Shiite Muslim factions Hezb-e-Wahdat and Harakat-e-Islami, the ousted Kabul government and ethnic Uzbek fighters loyal to rival Uzbek warlord's Abdul Rashid Dostam or Abdul Malik.

The Taleban hold around two-thirds of Afghanistan including the capital Kabul which they seized one year ago, and have imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law on areas they hold.



Guns that have just had their barrels crushed in Sydney are stacked after they were handed over on the last day of the Australian gun buy-back scheme (Reuters photo)

Congo president arrives home after shelling of Kinshasa

KINSHASA (AFP) — President Laurent Kabila arrived back in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Tuesday after cutting short a trip to Zambia when his own capital Kinshasa was shelled.

Mr. Kabila, who rushed home to hold an emergency cabinet meeting following the killing of 17 people by shells from the civil war in Brazzaville across the Congo River, made no comment at the airport, an AFP correspondent said.

He immediately went to his residence in the capital. The DRC government Monday said shells from the civil war in Congo had killed 17 people in Kinshasa and seriously wounded eight others. Witnesses said DRC

artillerymen had taken up positions to return fire on Brazzaville.

Mr. Kabila rushed home in such haste that he left his entire entourage behind him, arguing with Zambian officials at Lusaka Airport about their delay in catching the presidential plane, an AFP correspondent reported from Lusaka.

DRC Interior Minister Kongo Mwenze indicated Monday that Kinshasa had been deliberately targeted from Brazzaville by former members of the special presidential division of ousted Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Marshal Mobutu died in exile in Morocco after being ousted by Mr. Kabila in May, when Zaire was renamed.

Mr. Kongo charged that "the government of Brazzaville has told us that these shells were fired by elements of the former Special Presidential Division (DSP), the elite corps which was once under the direct authority of ... Mobutu, who are fighting alongside the supporters of former Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso."

General Sassou Nguesso's militiamen are battling the army and allied militia of Coogolese President Pascal Lissouba in Brazzaville, which has been devastated to an escalating conflict that has already claimed at least 4,000 lives, virtually partitioned the country and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

Taiwan fighters crash over E. China Sea, 3 dead

TAIPEI (R) — Two ageing Taiwanese air force jets collided Tuesday during a training mission off the island's eastern coast, killing all three pilots, the Defence Ministry said.

The warplanes — an F-5E and an F-5F, both U.S.-made — disappeared from tracking radar in the morning over the East China Sea, officials said.

Searchers found they had collided over the East China Sea some 20 kilometres southeast of eastern Hualien city and recovered the fliers' bodies.

"We have confirmed that all three pilots were killed and that the accident involved a mid-air collision," a ministry spokesman said by telephone.

The ministry did not know what caused the planes to collide, he said. "We will investigate further and hopefully have a more definite explanation," the spokesman said.

Taiwan is carrying out a multi-billion-dollar programme to update or replace its ageing F-5 and F-16 warplanes to counter rival China's military modernisation.

Despite a tight diplomatic and military embargo initiated by the Communist government in Beijing, Taiwan managed in 1992 to order 60 Mirage fighters from France and 150 F-16 fighters from the United States — angering China in the process.

Deliveries of the advanced warplanes are under way. Beijing has viewed nationalist-ruled Taiwan as a renegade province since a civil war split them in 1949.

It vows eventually to regain control of Taiwan — by force if the island abandons its policy of eventual reunion with the mainland and takes what Beijing deems to be steps towards independence.

Australians rush to hand in guns before deadline

CANBERRA (R) — Australian gunowners rushed to hand in newly outlawed weapons Tuesday ahead of a midnight deadline for a nationwide amnesty and gun buyback.

While authorities hailed the success of the scheme, sparked by the massacre of 35 people in Port Arthur last year, estimates of the number of high-powered, rapid-fire weapons still in the civilian hands ranged to up to one million.

But police said it was impossible to know how many outlawed guns the

buyback had failed to net. "You couldn't really estimate the number of unlicensed guns that are still out there," Sergeant Paul Speirs of the Australian Capital Territory Firearms Registry told Reuters.

The government said it had paid about 300 million Australian dollars (\$215 million) to buy more than 600,000 weapons from farmers, hunters and other members of the public.

Lured by the amnesty and generous cash payments, some people even handed in mortars, cannon and

machine guns. Attorney-General Daryl Williams has consistently ruled out any extension of the amnesty.

The National Coalition for Gun Control hailed the success of the buyback scheme, saying it was never going to take all Australia's guns out of circulation.

But critics said the buyback endangered the lives of law-abiding citizens, especially those in the remote outback.

"Every single house in Australia is now unprotected — that is the greatest

invitation for an increase in crime and all of the terrible things that have been happening," said Bob Katter, a federal rural MP.

Prime Minister John Howard put his own credibility on the line when he forced Australia's six states and two territories to impose tough, uniform laws banning almost all types of semi-automatic guns after the Port Arthur killings.

The gunman responsible for the Tasmania massacre, Martin Bryant, was jailed "for the term of his natural life" in November.

Singapore paper lambasts Indonesia over smog

SINGAPORE (R) — Singapore's leading newspaper lashed out at Indonesia Tuesday for the dense smog smothering much of Southeast Asia.

"The patience of Singaporeans and Malaysians is wearing thin," the pro-government Straits Times said in an editorial.

"As is evident, the cost of the haze is getting unacceptably high and it will get higher if not enough Indonesian officials act urgently, decisively," the daily said in a rare frontal attack during weeks of choking smog.

Indonesian President Suharto has apologised to neighbouring countries for the haze and Indonesian ministers have acknowledged the authorities did not react quickly enough to tackle the problem.

But the Singapore newspaper's anger was sparked by reports which quoted Indonesia's coordinating minister for people's welfare, Azwar Anas, as saying drought was primarily to blame for the bush fires which have raged out of control.

"Any neighbour of Indonesia's, which has bent over backwards to be accommodating as it knows Indonesia itself is as badly affected by the haze, might consider that an act of self-delusion," it said.

The newspaper said Singapore and Malaysia were affected every year by haze emanating from Indonesian



Malaysia's Information Minister Muhammad Rahmat (left) and Japanese Ambassador Nomura Issei try out the 'Jet Shooters' donated by Japan. France, Japan and Australia offered experts and equipment to smog-shrouded Malaysia as more Malaysian fire-fighters have been sent to Indonesia to help put out the forest fires which have caused Malaysia to be engulfed in thick haze for the past two weeks (Reuters photo)

fires set by small farmers and plantation owners clearing land in the dry season by the age-old method of fire.

"But this year, the picture changed drastically. The haze has been thicker and lasted longer," the Straits Times said.

It said the reported comment by Mr. Anas was "tantamount to saying that burning forests are nobody's business."

"They are all of Southeast Asia's business now," the newspaper said, adding that the region's concern was to prevent a recurrence.

"The solution is theirs to

execute," it said of the Indonesian authorities.

Singapore has escaped relatively lightly from the smoke spewing from fires on the huge island of Sumatra and Indonesia's Borneo state of Kalimantan.

The smoke has blanketed Malaysia, Singapore, parts of Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

In Singapore, the sun has not been visible for weeks and the haze has reached unhealthy levels on several occasions in recent weeks, prompting the government to issue health warnings.

Malaysia's Borneo island

state of Sarawak, by contrast, was virtually shut for a week by smog that reduced visibility in the state capital of Kuching to arm's length at one point.

Singapore's 3.5 million people were cheered up Tuesday morning by a fairly heavy shower — but the air quality index showed no immediate signs of radical improvement.

Half an hour after the rain, the index was still in the moderate range and not a long way from triggering a government warning for the elderly and ailing to reduce outdoor activities.

Indonesia crash focus now on pilot-tower exchange

JAKARTA (R) — Attention focused Tuesday on confusion between air traffic control and pilots of a Garuda Airbus as a factor which brought down the airliner, killing all 234 passengers and crew.

A dramatic transcript of a conversation between the control tower and pilots ended with a pilot screaming "Aaaaaa. Allahu-Akbar (God is greatest)" just before the aircraft hit a hillside in smog-shrouded Sumatra.

Investigators meanwhile intensified their search for the plane's "black box" cockpit and flight data recorders.

"The black boxes are thought to have fallen in a swampy area at the site," Transport Minister Haryanto Dhanutirto told reporters after briefing President Suharto on the situation.

The plane, flight GIA152, crashed Friday into a hillside banana and coconut plantation 45 km south of its

intended destination in the city of Medan, in north Sumatra.

Sources at the site said authorities would bring in heavy earth-moving equipment to try to locate the recorders.

The smoke haze to the area caused by forest and brush fires across Sumatra was initially thought to be partly responsible for the crash as the Garuda pilot had reported low visibility and could not see the nearby hills.

An experienced pilot, who asked not to be identified, said the voice recorder was more important than the flight data recorder.

He said it would clarify how the pilots reacted to the control tower's orders, if the ground proximity warning system was working and if it had activated with enough time for the pilots to respond.

Media Indonesia newspaper Tuesday published what it said was a trans-

lation of the original English language transcript of the conversation between the pilot of ill-fated aircraft and the tower.

The last part of the transcript reads:

Tower - GIA 152 turn right heading 046.

Report when established.

Plane - Turning right heading 040, GIA 152 check established.

Plane - GIA 152 confirm turn left or right heading 046.

Tower - Turn right, sir.

Plane - Roger 152.

Tower - 152 confirm you are turning left now.

Plane - Turning right now.

Tower - 152 okay you can continue turning left now.

Plane - (pause) Confirm turning left? we are turning right now.

Tower - Okay (pause) okay.

Tower - GIA 152 continue turning right heading 015.

Plane - Aaaaaa. Allahu-Akbar.

National Day flags remind Hong Kong who is boss

HONG KONG (AFP) — Red flags struck with five yellow stars are flying across Hong Kong ahead of the territory's first National Day under communist Chinese rule Wednesday.

As Hong Kong approaches 100 days under Beijing's control, the flags have been one of the starkest public reminders about who has been in charge since July 1.

"I have never seen anything like it," said retired worker, Tsang Tsuk, as he watched hundreds of Chinese flags being put up around a sports ground in Wanchai district of Hong Kong island.

"There is now a real

feeling that we are part of China," he said.

"Now I really feel I'm in China," said British expatriate Mark Green, who cannot look out of the window of his high rise office without seeing the flag on the roofs of neighbouring tower blocks.

National Day and the day after were declared public holidays after China reclaimed Hong Kong from Britain and scrapped colonial holidays for events such as the queen's birthday.

But neither Mr. Tsang nor Mr. Green will take part in any of the estimated 130 commemorations, including cultural and acrobatic shows from China and carnivals, for

the 48th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Crowds could have their enthusiasm somewhat dampened as the Hong Kong Observatory forecast more rain, although less heavy than the downpours which hit the moment of the handover on July 1 and continued for days.

Organisers, however, insisted things would go ahead on schedule come rain or shine.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) will open up its military garrison in Hong Kong for the first time since the handover. And Hong Kong's first chief executive, Tung Chee-Hwa, will be mak-

ing appearances across the territory.

Mr. Tung will kick off the Oct. 1 festivities by officiating at the morning raising of the Chinese and Hong Kong flags in front of the Convention and Exhibition Centre, where Prince Charles and President Jiang Zemin shook hands three months ago to seal the handover.

The complex will be also the venue for a cocktail reception for around 5,000 people. Mr. Tung will also attend various receptions held by civic groups.

A fireworks display over Victoria Harbour will cap the day's celebrations, but there will little hope for a cloudless

night to see the spectacular display in the night sky.

Home Affairs Secretary David Lan has expressed hope there would be no demonstrations to mar the occasion. "This is a day for happy events. Why don't (demonstrators) choose some other day?" he said.

But pro-democracy activists will be using the day to press their cause.

"We will hold a forum to mark the national day," said Fong Oi-Ling, spokesman for the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Movement of China, set up in support of the 1989 pro-democracy protests in Beijing.

The Chinese government has branded the

group subversive and intent on toppling the mainland communist government.

"We have no plan to stage protests," said Mr. Fong, unlike previous years under British rule, when the alliance was out in force call for an end to single-party rule, particularly for the June 4 anniversary of the military crackdown in Beijing.

But for the radical April Fifth group, the show continues despite the new masters. Twenty members plan to stage protests at the official reception at the convention centre.

"We will try to get our voice heard," said Leung Kwok-Hung, leader of the group.

Police detain Thai MP on car-bomb murder charge

BANGKOK (R) — Thai police said Tuesday they had detained an opposition member of parliament on suspicion of masterminding a car-bomb explosion which killed a fellow parliamentarian's mother.

Sithiporn Kam-Arj, Bangkok MP for the main opposition Democrat Party, surrendered to police in the capital Bangkok and was flown to eastern Chantaburi province, where he was being held, police told reporters.

Mr. Sithiporn has denied the charge but police said they were detaining him for further

investigations pending formal murder charges.

Police investigation centred on planting a car-bomb which killed a fellow Democrat MP's mother, Pattama Fuengprayoon, in Chantaburi earlier this month.

Police believe the bomb was meant to kill the fellow MP's father, Sanit Fuengprayoon, a potential candidate for the next election in Chantaburi.

But Mr. Sanit's wife Pattama used the car and the bomb, triggered by remote control went off, police said.



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Attack fought back

THE KIND of injuries that Khaled Misha'al, the head of the Political Bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has sustained at the hands of two foreign assailants and the events that surrounded the attack against him on Thursday, have all the makings of an assassination attempt. It is understandable that our security authorities have been conducting their investigations in secret and that our politicians have had to be extra careful in commenting publicly on the incident. But when the investigations are completed and the necessary political contacts made, the public needs to know exactly what had happened.

His Majesty the King, addressing a rally in Zarqa yesterday, went as far as he could in explaining to Jordanians, albeit indirectly, that while he has been doing everything in his power to contain the political ramifications of the extremely dangerous attempt on Mr. Misha'al's life, his top priority had been to save the man's life, even if that required much more diplomacy and discretion than we would have liked.

The nature of the weapon allegedly deployed to knock Mr. Misha'al unconscious or incapacitated suggested that the assailants, whom everybody presumes to be Israeli Mossad agents, were out to avenge attacks against Israelis claimed by Hamas.

If it is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that Israel has decided to take up its struggle with Hamas to the streets of Jordan, this will constitute not only a serious breach, in letter and spirit, of the two countries' peace treaty but also a major problem calling for the intervention of the main witness to the treaty, namely U.S. President Bill Clinton.

His Majesty was emphatic in rejecting any attempt by any group or country to turn Jordan into a battlefield to settle old scores. "We are against terrorism and we will not allow this country to be a theatre or base for terrorist acts in whatever shape or form," the King had told a group of journalists on Sunday. And this is why perhaps His Majesty decided to send His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on an urgent mission to Washington.

There is a clear message in the Monarch's words to all parties, wherever they come from: Do not tamper with Jordanian security or threaten our sovereignty and territorial integrity. We should and do have zero tolerance for any interference in our security and stability.

An attempt on the life of a Jordanian citizen, such as Mr. Misha'al, is tantamount to an attack on the entire country. The Kingdom will never serve as a base for others to promote their narrow self-interests and vengeance. This is simply not the way to bring about peace and reconciliation between and among peoples of the region and elsewhere.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Fuad Abu Hijleh criticised the Palestine National Authority for cracking down on the Islamist groups of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, warning of the consequences to national unity. Hijleh said, that by striking at what was called the infrastructure of the Islamists, the PNA risks triggering an internal strife which would please Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the United States. The two Islamic groups who have been waging resistance attacks on the Israelis are national groups seeking the liberation of their country and are not to be considered as terrorist groups as Israel has been calling them, the writer said. He added that the closure of the Islamists' offices and the arrest of their leaders was a "political" rather than a "security" decision. It is to be noted, said Hijleh, that the PNA's campaign was not matched by an Israeli response to Palestinian demands for the release of thousands of Arab detainees in Israeli jails, a halt of the Israeli settlement programme and the unfreezing of Palestinian funds.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek praised Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al's driver Mohammad Abu Yousef for pursuing his employer's attackers, saying his was an act of bravery. Fanek added that Abu Yousef was instrumental in the arrest of the assailants, and had not intervened the assailants, who are most probably Israeli agents, could have vanished in the crowd and thus be free to launch similar attacks on other citizens. The writer said the sophisticated weapon used in the attack on Misha'al could not have been provided by individuals but only by governments that possess advanced technology, and all indications in this incident point to Israel as the supplier of the weapon. According to Fanek, the attack is a reminder of the sophisticated weapon that the Israelis utilised in assassinating Yahya Ayash, the Palestinian engineer who Israel said made the bombs for suicide attacks. It is too early to reach definite conclusions about the whole affair since the investigations into the case are still under way, said the writer, but he demanded that the government put the results of these investigations before the public.

Washington Watch

A message on restoring confidence

By Dr. James Zogby

THE PEACE process is in a state of collapse. This poses a danger not only to the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. U.S. interests in a stable and secure Middle East will also be negatively impacted. What is required now is firm and aggressive U.S. leadership — specifically through pressure on and sanctions against policies of the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Anything less than this would compromise U.S. interests and the security and stability of U.S. allies in the Middle East.

This was the essence of the message I conveyed to the State Department last week. I was privileged to have been invited as a "Distinguished Speaker" at the Secretary's Open Forum — a series of guest lectures organised out of the office of the secretary of state.

As I began my message I told the assembled audience of State Department personnel that I have for many years made a serious effort to explain U.S. policy to the Arab World. I have also worked to bring Arab needs and concerns into the U.S. policy debate.

The gap, however, between U.S. policy and politics and the just requirement of the Arab World has become so great that it is increasingly difficult to bridge the chasm.

There is, today, not only a crisis in trust and confidence between the Israeli government and the Arab World, but there is, in the Arab World, a loss of confidence in U.S. leadership as well.

I reminded my audience that when the peace process began after the Gulf War, then President George Bush articulated a vision of a new Middle East of new possibilities. This, he noted, was important for the Middle East and also for the U.S.

At every step the Arabs responded affirmatively to the U.S. initiative. They went to Madrid and participated in multilateral peace talks. When Secretary of State James Baker urged Arab states to end the secondary boycott

of Israel, many Arab states responded with the condition that Israel freeze settlements. Arabs came to the White House for the 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles and participated in the economic summits at Casablanca, Amman and Cairo. And when terrorism struck in 1996, many Arab states accepted the U.S. invitation to Sharm Al Sheikh, to reaffirm their commitment to peace.

But peace was to be reciprocal, and Arab expectations in the peace process have not been fulfilled. Palestinians are poorer, more vulnerable, and less free than they were before peace was signed. Israel, on the other hand, has been aggressively seizing more Palestinian land, building more settlements and roads, and using closures and collective punishment to economically strangle the Palestinian National Authority.

With the election of the Likud government, those Israeli anti-peace policies have accelerated to the point where most Palestinians and Arabs have lost hope and confidence in the peace process itself.

As a result the Palestinian and Arab leaderships that made peace have become vulnerable. If Israeli policies have damaged Arab confidence, what has further compounded the problem are hostile actions of the U.S. Congress and the gap that exists between U.S. policy concerns and the rhetoric of the U.S. political discourse.

I reminded my audience that the U.S. has chided Arab leaders for using language in speeches causing Israelis to question Arab commitment to peace. The same, I noted, should be said to U.S. politicians who have passed anti-Arab legislation on Jerusalem, against Syria, Palestinian aid and even the Arab League. In addition, I noted the context of speeches given by President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, Republican candidate for President Bob Dole, and congressional leaders Newt Gingrich and Dick Gephardt before the

pro-Israel lobby AIPAC, — all of which sent the wrong U.S. message to the Arab World. Arabs cannot so easily dismiss the rhetoric of campaign-year politics. It is hurtful and damaging to their confidence in U.S. leadership and to their belief in U.S. intentions.

What the Arab World is in need of is U.S. commitment to peace not just in words, but in deeds. Secretary Albright, I indicated, did make an effort at balance in her recent Middle East visit. But, what the Arab World now wants to see is what will be done to arrest the downward slide in the peace effort — what measures will be taken to press the Israelis to stop settlements, implement agreements reached, and complete negotiations on outstanding issues.

It is wrong, I told my audience, for the U.S. today to remain passive in the face of Israeli actions. As the U.S. diligently presses Palestinians, it must do more to press the Israelis to stop their aggressive and unilateral policies.

Five years ago, at the beginning of the process, it may have been possible for Secretary Baker to give the countries of the Middle East the U.S. phone number and tell them to call when they were ready to make peace. But today, with all the energy that has been invested in the peace process and with the erosion in U.S. standing in the region and with the loss of hope in the future of peace, such a tactic in the midst of a failing process only serves to increase despair and feed extremism.

I concluded my remarks, noting that despite congressional pressure and the efforts of the Israeli lobby, I believe that the administration could win a majority in Congress and the American Jewish community to its side if it took a strong leadership role in pursuit of peace. And with so much at stake, we can hardly afford not to act quickly and decisively to restore confidence.

Secretaries of state should just say 'no'

By Thomas L. Friedman

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

On my way to Israel to watch Madeleine Albright's inaugural Middle East tour, I ran into a friend who said to me, "Boy, she has really put her credibility on the line with this trip." I thought about that for a moment, and without even knowing why answered, "I don't think so."

There was a time when secretaries of state were measured by whether they made progress solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Henry Kissinger was the model. To be a successful secretary of state you had to shuttle successfully at least once between Arabs and Jews. "I shuttle, therefore I am."

The Arab-Israeli problem provided this test because of a combination of attributes. Vital U.S. interests were at stake. U.S. diplomacy was indispensable for a solution, and at different key junctures — after the 1973 war, after Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, after the Oslo breakthrough — the region was ripe for diplomacy.

But that combination isn't

quite there anymore. Indeed, Warren Christopher's tenure as secretary of state will best be remembered for his failure to understand this.

Like his predecessors, Mr. Christopher wanted to emulate Mr. Kissinger and leave his mark on the Mideast. But 25 trips to the region left him with only Hafez Assad's boot marks on his back. Mr. Christopher's credibility was damaged by Arab-Israeli diplomacy because he made it more important than it was — more important than China, Russia, Germany or Japan.

What he failed to understand was that resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict was a vital U.S. interest during the cold war, because this conflict could always escalate into a U.S.-Soviet nuclear war. Today it is an act of kindness.

Today the greatest strategic danger to America in the Middle East comes from Iraq or Iran

acquiring nuclear or biological weapons and threatening the flow of oil from the Gulf. Palestinian terrorism is terrible, but it is not a strategic threat.

Israel and its Arab neighbours can be relevant to the United States to the extent that solving their own problem better enables the United States to protect and promote its interests elsewhere in the region. But as long as they want to just fight in their little sandbox, all they need is a baby-sitter.

If they are really ready to work with each other and with America to help create a new future focused on growth, instead of mutual destruction, then they need a secretary of state.

Mr. Christopher gave off the sense that he wanted a deal, a trophy, more than the parties themselves did, so he ended up as their baby-sitter. No job was too small for him. He was reduced to a messenger because

he had no message of his own. He didn't know that he could say "no" to them and their ambivalence, and so they felt no compulsion to resolve their ambivalence. As the Middle East expert Stephen P. Cohen notes: "Unless there is an ability for the U.S. to say 'no,' it can't expect the parties to say 'yes.'"

Which brings us to the present. The mood in Israel is really grim. There is a sense that the peace process is now an impossibly tangled knot, which cannot be unravelled by pulling on a string here or there.

That was why Israel's president, Ezer Weizman, practically invited Mrs. Albright on Wednesday to pressure the parties into a deal. He knows that the knot will be untied only by a supreme act of diplomacy or a new act of war.

If Mrs. Albright gets "Christopherised" and opts for picking at whatever little string Yasser, Bibi and Hafez offer, she is doomed. She needs to make clear that she doesn't do doors, she doesn't do windows, she

doesn't do ceasefires and she doesn't do small concessions.

Neither her credibility nor America's vital interests are dependent on whether any of these gentlemen throw her a bone. She should insist that they propose realistic solutions to the core problems; if not, she will walk, and they can have their little war in peace.

Secretary Albright is doing the parties here a huge, morally responsible favour by trying to help resolve their feud so that they can get on with life and development. If they have other priorities, if they want to play out their tribal thing, if they prefer to manipulate the U.S. Congress or media to score small victories, well, good-bye, good luck and God bless.

Great powers should never get involved in the small politics of small tribes. Mr. Christopher got addicted to the drug of small successes. Mrs. Albright needs to just say "no."

The New York Times

Brawling democracy vs the totalitarian state

By Jonathan Mirsky

MANILA — Consider the messy democracy in the Philippines and the reformist totalitarian state in China.

A political battle is raging in the Philippines because, without flinching, President Fidel Ramos appears to want a second term starting next year, which would violate the constitution unless his supporters connive to change it before then.

Even critics acknowledge that Mr. Ramos has been an effective, perhaps outstanding, president. The Philippines has weathered the current financial slump in Southeast Asia better than most of its neighbours. Mr. Ramos promoted policies that put the stability of the region's first democracy on a sounder footing after years of near-ruin under the misguided, authoritarian rule of Ferdinand Marcos and the beginnings of recovery under President Corason Aquino.

But Filipinos have an understandable aversion now to anything that smacks of a return to dictatorship. Everyday, Mr. Ramos must face the press, which calls on him to divulge his political intentions. Editorials attack him and columnists brand him a liar, a cockroach and a rat under a dung heap. At 6 o'clock each evening, church bells ring and car horns sound to protest the illegitimate alleged ambitions of the president.

Recently, Cardinal Jaime Sin, the Philippine Catholic prelate who helped mobilise the mass "people's power" street demonstrations that eventually toppled Marcos and brought Mrs. Aquino

to power, told me he feared Mr. Ramos' belief in himself as "a messiah" would bring about "a second Cambodia" — a bloody civil war in the Philippines. The cardinal and Mrs. Aquino have organised a huge demonstration in Manila to let the president know he must step down.

What a contrast with China. Over the summer, a group of elderly Chinese Communists met at the seaside resort of Beidaihe to plan the next five years. In secret conclave ahead of the party congress, they decided who would be the new prime minister, who would be in the politburo, how far to proceed with the anti-graft campaign, how much the armed forces would be cut, how the economy would be managed and whether the party would reconsider its verdict on the bloody suppression of the students and others at Tiananmen Square in 1989 who sought not the overthrow of the party but greater accountability and an end to rampant corruption.

No Chinese newspaper offered criticism of the way these decisions were reached. No one suggested that Jiang Zemin might not be the best leader for the next five years. Apologists say: China needs strong government — look at what happened to the Soviet Union and the mess that followed the destruction of its Communist Party.

Yet in the Philippines under Marcos, the country was ruled by a political dynasty so venal that it caused the collapse of what had been one of the richest economies in Southeast Asia. Those were the years of Imelda Marcos' hundreds of pairs of shoes, the Marcos mil-

lions in foreign banks and the murder in broad daylight at Manila international airport of Mrs. Aquino's husband, Ninoy, who was Marcos' greatest adversary.

Even though Mr. Ramos, a former armed forces commander, helped overthrow Marcos, protected Mrs. Aquino from repeated coup attempts and then pushed the Philippines along the road to economic recovery, J.V. Cruz, a former Philippine ambassador to Britain, complained recently in The Manila Chronicle: "We put our president up on a pedestal and venerate him and then discover he's just a goddamned cheap liar."

It is as if the Taiwan press, accompanied by the Dalai Lama, had moved to Beijing, where everyday both attacked President Jiang.

The Philippines will be a better place if a resurgent people's power movement turns Mr. Ramos from his faithful political path. Should the peaceful protests fail and civil war erupt, as Cardinal Sin fears, at least many of the 70 million Filipinos will have made their voices heard.

But if a second Tiananmen comes to China — not necessarily in Beijing but, more dangerously, in the countryside, where discontented peasants are now regularly kidnapping officials and attacking Communist Party premises, and spreads from province to province — who will be able to say that the Chinese government was given fair warning?

The writer is Asia editor of The Times of London. This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

What's in it for us?

To the Editor:

IT IS with astonishment that I, a North American, read your editorial: "Creating new facts?" (Sept. 27, 1997). In this editorial, as in so many others, you again invoke U.S. President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as two officials who should be concerned about the fate of Palestinians and the peace process.

They aren't. Surely after the Albright visit to the Middle East in mid-September, it should have been clear that her only interests were (echoing Clinton): 1. the security of Israel; and 2. preventing Arab states from taking action that was detrimental to Israel; such as cancelling the MENA conference. Palestinians were simply "invisible."

The Americans have only three significant interests in the Middle East: 1. cheap and secure oil; 2. Israel; and 3. political and military domination of the region. Interests one and two are obvious. Interest three is achieved by using U.S. allies Turkey and Israel to invade any country to dominate them militarily (Israel into Lebanon; Turkey into Iraq), with U.S. backing, and American military bases in the heart of the Middle East from which American military aircraft can invade any country's airspace, such as Iraq's. To that is added American use of the U.N. as an adjunct to the State Department, to isolate countries which refuse to acquiesce to U.S. policies, such as Iran, Iraq and Syria.

So for President Clinton and Albright, Arab, let alone Palestinian, interests are of no significance, unless they impinge negatively on America's three big interests. Then these officials play at being "intermediaries," which means simply telling the Arab states how to behave. In this, Palestinian grievances and interests don't even appear in the American optic — they are simply nuisances which detract from the support of America's powerful Jewish lobby which is fanatically pro-Israeli.

In American eyes, Arabs don't count; only Jews do.

I am really surprised that this reality has still not sunk in.

Hendrik S. Weiler,
Amman.

IT
OCCURRED
TO ME ...

Reschedule

your
Journey

By Ali Kassay

"HOW MUCH longer will I have to wait here?" Asked the irritated passenger, only to receive the stock Jordanian answer whenever things have gone wrong and there is no realistic prospect of setting them right in the foreseeable future: "Everything is all right." To which was added the assurance: "You will be on your way in no time at all."

This exchange took place in the afternoon of last Wednesday at Queen Alia International Airport between an official of Royal Jordanian airlines and one of the numerous and by then furious passengers on the airline's flight to Amsterdam, who included yours in exasperation.

You see, the flight was due to take off at 8:00 a.m. However, when I called on the previous day to confirm my flight details I was told that take off time was 10:45. I asked why there was a delay, and I was informed that no delay had occurred; the flight was scheduled for 10:45 all along. I conceded the point, happy at the prospect of an extra hour of sleep.

When I reached the airport I learnt the flight was actually due at half past one in the afternoon. That was inconvenient, but at least some progress had occurred, in that Royal Jordanian now conceded that there was indeed a delay.

At half past one all passengers lined up to board the aeroplane, only to be told that there was a further delay until half past two. In an act of the purest optimism, we lined up again, only to be told that there was really no point in doing so yet, and we would be called to embark "very soon." This is when people started expressing their irritation and suggesting alternatives, only to be assured that their anxiety was unjustified and their efforts unnecessary, since they would be on their way in no time.

At half past three we boarded the aeroplane, only to be informed by the captain that the initial technical failure had been repaired, but a new fault had reared its ugly head which would be dealt with in no time. Yet another hour later, we were told that this new technical failure had proved trickier than anyone had originally imagined, so we might as well go back to terra firma for the moment.

At 5:30 in the evening, after eight hours of assurances, we were finally treated to the truth, that the aeroplane was in no shape to fly, and that another one would be made available for our comfort. We finally took off at eight in the evening.

Typically enough, Royal Jordanian did not see fit to release us in the morning and invite us to return when they actually had an aeroplane capable of flight. They did not see fit to compensate us for this delay, nor did they feel any necessity to provide us with refreshments during our long wait save for a breakfast at 10 in the morning. Moreover, they did not give passengers of this flight the usual service assessment form, doubtless inspired by the nationalist imperative to keep our national carrier's record spotless, showing nothing but satisfied customers.

As proud Jordanians, we are only accustomed to such treatment which we accept albeit grudgingly. The surprising fact now is that we are beginning to extend this treatment to foreign guests. If this continues the acronym for our national carrier will be read as Reschedule your Journey.

NEWS
priority

condemns Israeli

IT
CURRED
TO ME ...
Reschedule
your
Journey
By Ali Kassar

King pledges priority to address Zarqa's urban woes

(Continued from page 1)

as soon as possible," he said. "We have visited the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company and examined the plans for improvements to make our country safe of any danger emanating from oil and its products and we are determined to ensure that these products are safe," the King said.

"We cannot allow Zarqa to be a waste dump neither can we allow its inhabitants to face a situation that had prevailed in the past to continue or to see expansion in construction work at random here and there which is an uncomfortable situation for the Zarqa people and therefore we will follow methods for removing the sources of complaints and we will address the situation drastically and we will give Zarqa priority," King Hussein promised.

Describing Zarqa as the city of Arab Army soldiers who embodied the elite of the Arab youth, the King stressed that the city has served as home to all Jordanians of different origins and under all circumstances.

Zarqa, 25 kilometres north-east of Amman, is what some of its residents call the forgotten city of Jordan.

From a small town built around the railroad and military posts early this century, populated by Chechens, Sal-

ties, Druze and bedouins among others, the city on the edge of the desert is now inhabited by more than 600,000 people.

In 1948, the city provided an affordable new residence for thousands of Palestinians who were driven out of their homes after the creation of Israel.

Zarqa was again flooded by Palestinian refugees after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Its relatively cheap cost of living and proximity to Amman attracted more than 100,000 of the refugees who lost their jobs in the Arab Gulf after the Gulf war.

And in between these landmarks, people moved into the city from various parts of the Kingdom in search of work opportunities in Zarqa and Amman. Soldiers and workers in Zarqa's industries eventually brought their families and made the city their home.

Zarqa became a microcosm of the country: its residents having their roots in the north, the south, the West Bank and the East Bank.

This unique demographic composition, however, hurt the city instead of helping it, according to Zarqa residents.

In a country that for long formulated its policies with an eye on tribal considerations, Zarqa did not have the clout that other smaller but tribally based cities had. It lacked the tribal backbone that would have prompt-

ed the necessary government attention, residents say.

The result: Zarqa's fast, haphazard and unregulated growth was not accompanied by sufficient government spending to keep up with the city's rising requirements.

The problem was compounded by building on state-owned lands and outside municipal areas, which meant no provision of services.

At the outset of his visit King Hussein visited the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) where he was received by Ministers of Interior, Energy and Mineral Resources, Zarqa Governor Eid Qatameh and Director General of JPRC Abdul Wahab Zu'bi, and its board of directors.

King Hussein was briefed on the JPRC achievements by Mr. Zu'bi who said the refinery is one of the major pillars of the Jordanian economy, noting that it covers Jordan's need of petroleum products.

Mr. Zu'bi pointed out that the JPRC is not only an oil refinery, but rather an integrated industrial compound, saying that it manufactures gas cylinders and oil tankers as well as spare parts and oil cans.

He added that the JPRC has directed special attention to the quality of its products and is now producing products conforming to specifications of industrialised countries.

He said that the level of lead

in the air is very low and that it's level in human blood in Jordan is 2.18 microgrammes per 100 square centimetres, which is less than the maximum, 25 microgrammes, as set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

A recent study on pollution in Hashmiah carried out in 1995 showed that pollution rates caused by nitro-oxides are lower than internationally-accepted standards, he said.

He noted that the company in 1991 embarked on efforts to decrease the ozone-exhausting gases, and also in 1991 the company started producing and marketing an alternative butane gas.

Moreover, he said, the JPRC is currently carrying out an energy conservation project costing JD11 million, but are set to save JD2.6 million a year.

King Hussein and Queen Noor went to Al Thawra Al Arabia school, where a big celebration was held.

The King was accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Amr Khasawneh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the King's advisors Salah Abu Zeid and Hmeidi Al Fayed.

At the end of the celebration, Zarqa Governor Eid Qatameh presented the King and the Queen with two commemorative gifts.

Sheikh Yassin flown to Amman after release from Israeli prison

(Continued from page 1)

evidence of a tool or a means that caused the harm that befell our son, Khaled," the King said in Zarqa.

Hamas has accused Israel's secret service, the Mossad, of trying to assassinate Misha'al by putting a device to his head which emitted poisonous chemicals.

Israeli diplomats have denied the charge. Lawyers said on Tuesday Jordanian prosecutors were treating the assault as attempted murder (see separate story).

"We will not accept that our country be a base for conspiracy against anyone," King Hussein said. "Jordanians' safety is our direct responsibility," he stressed.

The King said that he will defend all Jordanian citizens wherever they might be and defend their right to a decent and secure life.

"I would like to stress before you that Jordanian citizen have great value and that their safety is my direct responsibility," the King said adding "this applies to Khaled Misha'al as a Jordanian citizen and to all other Jordanians."

"I will not allow any Jordanian citizens to be exposed to danger from any source and we will defend Jordanians anywhere on this earth and defend their right to life," the King told the cheering crowds that turned out in strength to greet him.

But in a message that appeared directed at Hamas militants, the King also called on all Jordanians to carry out their duty towards their nation. "Jordanian citizens should realise the duty required from them towards their country and should join their ranks under the Jordanian flag and march forward so that Jordan can remain an oasis of security and peace for all its citizens and for all its guests as well," King Hussein stressed.

On the other hand, the King praised the moderate Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood by saying that "under very difficult circumstances, they adopted honourable stands and they rose to the occasion whenever the country was exposed to danger and in Zarqa in particular."

"Let us race each other towards offering more sacrifices and more efforts for our country and let us show pride in our Kingdom and above all in our Muslim faith, our nation and our pluralism. And let us all as Muslims and Christians show our pride in Jordan and serve as a good example for others in democracy and shura by respecting human rights and by working towards a promising future," King Hussein said.

"We can by no means abort enemy conspiracies unless we act in cohesion and collaboration," the King pointed out. Referring to the peace process, King Hussein expressed hope that the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations in Washington will bear fruit and would mark the start of negotiations on the other tracks.

He noted that the former stage witnessed unilateral

measures that obstructed the peace process and "we expect from the Israeli government to abandon its traditional and familiar political line and come up with an initiative that can revive the peace process."

"I call on the Israeli government to undertake daring and creative steps and to take humanitarian measures with regard to our Palestinian brothers and our sons and daughters and the detainees most prominent among them, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin," said King Hussein.

Expressing hope for an end to the sufferings of the Palestinians, the King said: "We hope to see an end to the sufferings of our kinsmen as soon as possible this gives us renewed confidence and hope that all parties will be committed to working for the attainment of a just and comprehensive peace."

"It is our hope that the voice of reason will prevail among all parties so that we can witness the end of the cycle of violence and counter violence which is caused by despair and frustration," King Hussein said. "Enough of blood, enough of demolished homes as we have the right to live in security and stability and this can be achieved through dialogue that aims at finding satisfactory solutions for the coming generations."

"We will continue to support and back our brothers with all our might because they are the closest to us and back their efforts to regain their full rights on their national soil."

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PNA condemns Israeli intransigence ahead of talks

(Continued from page 1)

agreement U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright worked out here Monday with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and PNA negotiator Abbas.

Ms. Albright initially proposed Israel refrain from constructing Jewish settlements in Arab east Jerusalem and other actions that the Palestinians considered provocative on a trip to the Middle East three weeks ago.

Her argument is the atmosphere for successful negotiations would be hurt otherwise.

The Palestinians tried to get a time-out included in the agreement Monday to resume negotiations after a six-month lapse. Israel resisted.

But with U.S. support, the Palestinians got the issue placed on the agenda for negotiations with Israel next month. And a senior U.S. official told reporters the time-out should last at least through negotiations on an overall settlement.

The negotiations would include deciding the future of Jerusalem, Palestinian demands for a state, and the disposition of refugees. Judging by the current

slow pace of talks that could take years.

It is questionable Israel would agree to a freeze.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week approved 300 new units for the Efrat settlement on the West Bank and asserted the right of Jews to live in what the Bible calls Judea and Samaria.

Ms. Albright, announcing the resumption of negotiations, said it stopped a "downward spiral" in Mideast peacemaking.

She also called it "a medium step" toward peace in the region.

Two sets of U.S.-supervised negotiations were set up. The first, beginning Oct. 6 in the region, is to carry out an Israeli military pullback on the West Bank under the 1993 and 1995 Oslo accords. The second, beginning Oct. 13 in Washington, will consider further Israeli withdrawals and try to set a target date for an overall settlement between the two sides.

"It is an agenda for the future, but it is not more than that," cautioned a senior U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The talks, at a standstill since March, are conducted by joint

committees set up to decide how to implement pledges from a 1995 interim peace deal on Palestinian self-rule. The committees deal with the following issues:

- Opening of a "safe passage" enabling Palestinians to travel freely between non-contiguous autonomous zones in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.
- Operation of a Palestinian international airport in the southern Gaza Strip.
- Construction of a commercial seaport in Gaza.
- Release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.
- Allocation of water resources.
- Economic affairs.
- Civil affairs.
- Security.
- Steering committee, with general oversight of talks.

On another front, Ms. Albright met separately with Mr. Levy and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Sharara on the 19-month suspension of Israeli-Syrian negotiations over the Golan Heights.

State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said there were "significant gaps" between the two sides.

Syria had elicited a promise from Mr. Netanyahu's Labour Party predecessors it could get the strategic border enclave back in exchange for peace.

Israel's northern military commander said Tuesday that arch-foe Syria was making basic preparations for a possible war and he hoped Damascus was preparing also for peace talks.

Major-General Amiram Levine, the commander, spoke to Israeli reporters.

"Syria on its military side is making very basic preparations for the possibility of a war developing. I hope that on the political side they're also making preparations for — and attempts at — talking," he said.

But in parliament, Army Chief Lieutenant-General Amnon Shahak told a closed-door committee meeting there was no information Syria intended to attack, according to an official who briefed reporters.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai also told army radio that "Syria's preferred option today is to arrive at a dialogue and not confrontation."

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Saket denies discord over operating Israeli flights to Aqaba airport

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Bassam Saket Tuesday denied that "differences" exist with Israel on operating Israeli flights to the Aqaba Airport in line with an agreement signed earlier this month.

Speaking to reporters following the Cabinet session, which focused on the ministry's transportation strategy, Dr. Saket said Jordan is awaiting Israel to fix the date for starting its flights.

"There are no differences between the technical committees in Jordan and Israel over the operation of these flights," Dr. Saket said. "I believe that the first flight will be launched soon, may be as soon as next month," he added.

The minister's statement came following comments by the head of Jordan's Civil Aviation Authority, Jasser Zayad, who confirmed that Israel had delayed the operation of flights to Aqaba as agreed previously between the sides.

Earlier this month, Jordan and Israel signed an agreement for the joint use of Aqaba Airport, serving the twin Red Sea resorts of Eilat and Aqaba. According to the interim phase of the agreement, international flights to Eilat will use the Aqaba airfield just across the border.

The future joint airport will serve areas in south Jordan and the Gulf of Aqaba as well as the Israeli resorts of Eilat and Ovdah.

Meanwhile, Dr. Saket said it is premature to choose a "strategic partner" to join the debt-ridden Royal Jordanian (RJ).

The minister added that a study has formulated a "programme" to restructure the RJ administratively and financially in order to attract foreign investors.

He added that the ministry has decided to appoint "financial and legal advisors who would extend help during the two-year restructuring programme. The advisors represent an independent firm not individuals."

Dr. Saket emphasised that the "strategic partner" should not be a "financial institution" but "an establishment which works in the aviation field."

He added that after choosing a "partner," RJ will make access easy for any local and foreign investors as well as funds to purchase the RJ shares during the privatisation process. But he stressed that will happen only in "the advanced stage."

Dr. Saket said the RJ debt will be solved in line with the readjustment programme.

"The strategic partner should feel that it will not bear the RJ burden. This problem will be tackled by

the state," the minister said.

The minister emphasised that the transportation sector in Jordan, which employs 10 per cent of the domestic work force, has contributed 11 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1996, with a six per cent growth rate.

Dr. Saket added that his ministry has proposed a feasibility "light rail road" project that would link the capital with Zarqa city.

The ministry's Strategy Study indicated that five countries, namely France, Holland, Germany, the Czech Republic and Canada are interested in the project. The study said that the Council of Ministers has approved the project. It did not indicate how much the project will cost.

Among the major projects that the ministry is proposing is the expansion of Aqaba port, with a capital of JD40 million, in order to increase the unloading capacity of the port from four million metric tonnes to eight million tonnes per year.

Dr. Saket said foreign investors have expressed their willingness to join the project.

The European Investment Bank has expressed its willingness to grant JD24 million to the project, while the remaining JD16 million will be paid by investors from the private sector.

Egypt unleashes pension scheme from state hands

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has taken a leap towards weaning its economy off state control by giving free rein to its multi-billion pound pension fund to invest in the country's fledgling securities market, economists and traders say.

Social Affairs Minister Mervat Al Tellawi announced the government's decision in remarks published last week, saying it was aimed at "boosting the ministry's income which in turn will raise the value of the pension schemes offered to the citizens."

Government officials estimate the pension scheme surplus at 33 per cent of gross domestic product, which was forecast at 266.4 billion pounds (\$78.48 billion) in fiscal year 1996/97.

Ms. Tellawi did not say how much of the surplus would be invested in the stock market. But economists said any even a one per cent investment would make a difference.

"It's releasing an astronomical amount of money which will definitely boost the capital market and the economy," said Heba Handoussa, managing director of the Economic Research Forum which sometimes advises the government.

"This is one benchmark towards liberalising the economy, it's definitely a step in the right direction," she added.

Egypt bent on becoming an emerging market to be reckoned with, has recently implemented its International Monetary Fund and World Bank-backed economic reform programme in earnest.

The government has stepped up its flagship privatisation programme, updated its bourse infrastructure and taken bailing steps towards deregulating its banking sector.

Unfettering the pension funds is part of the programme, officials say.

"This is all part of diversifying the economy," said Mahmoud Moheddin, senior adviser to Egypt's newly-appointed and reform-minded Economy Minister Youssef Boutros-Ghali.

"Our social security scheme historically has not been very efficiently managed. Now we're making use of it," he indicated.

According to the latest official figures, the social insurance scheme covered more than 83 per cent of the workforce.

It provides a monthly wage for workers once they turn 60 years old but the government has been encouraging its employees to take early retirement to help cut back overemployment in public firms.

Monthly contributions to the state's pension fund are mandatory for all public and private sector employees and are calculated on basic and variable wages. The employee, the firm and the government all pay different percentages to the scheme.

The government has so far been the sole beneficiary of the investment potential of the billions available to the scheme.

It has regularly dipped into the pension funds, paying discounted interest rates. The scheme provides up to 68 per cent of funds for the National Bank for Investment, which foots the bill for public investments. The rest of the pension funds went into buying fixed-income government paper.

"The privileged access to public pension funds is a less transparent way of financing government projects...it probably encouraged more government spending than market-based rates would induce," the World Bank said in a recent report.

"It's very important that these funds are properly managed and they have not been. Giving these funds flexibility is a step in the right direction provided they strike a balance between high and low risk securities. After all, it is a social security scheme," said economist Said Naggar, an ex-World Bank adviser.

World Bank resident economist Chang-Po Yang told Reuters the way the government invests the funds is crucial to the success of the project. "Who is going to make investment decisions? The same people who have been doing it so far? If the matter is handled with prudence then it will be a good idea," he said.

Although the government has not given details about its plans, traders say the funds are just what the bourse needs.

"These huge inflows will cause a lot of stabilisation and bring liquidity to the market. We have been calling for market makers and institutional investors and this is just what is needed," said Neveen Al Tahry, managing director of Delta EAB.

Analysts say Egypt's securities market is one of the most attractive in the region. Average price-earnings ratios are a low 13.5 and forecast at 11.5 for 1998.

"Our securities market functions very well in serving the pension schemes of the United States and Latin America. It's time we started doing the same for ourselves," Mr. Moheddin said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1997
By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) Things are coming at you from all different directions. Don't hesitate: get out there and push for what you want. A domestic matter needs your attention. Don't get so busy taking care of outside business you forget something that needs to be done at home.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20) You're able to move at a more rapid pace today. Usually, you like to study things carefully before taking action. You won't have time for that now. You're able to keep up, and even outmanoeuvre some of the others. You're inspired. Get into the action!

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) You could be waylaid by an emergency or two today. You might set an agenda in the morning and have everything be completely different by evening. You'll do well, except for a slight tendency to get jittery. Stay on top of the situation. Don't get sucked into the whirlpool.

MOON CHILDREN

(June 22 to July 21) There's a big change underway. You may have decided to move on to the next adventure. You're good in situations like this. The pace is a little bit nerve-racking, though. You're more powerful than you realise. Get out there and make things happen.

LEO

(July 22 to August 21) You are very intelligent right now, and a valuable member of the team. You help everybody else stay calm. Money is still a weak spot, though. You can go through a lot of it very quickly. Be aware of that and you'll stay in control. Have a great time while you're at it!

VIRGO

(August 22 to September 22) This is fast-paced day. Assist your friends and co-workers who are out on the front lines. Meanwhile, you're very lucky in romance. Your sweetheart is trying to teach you something. This could help your career. Don't argue with a person who cares very much about you.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22) It would be a great help to everyone if you could stay calm and collected. You mustn't get lethargic, though. Force yourself to concentrate on the task at hand or you'll become part of the problem. Settle down, but still move right along.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21) It's a very intense day. Things are breaking down or changing and new orders are coming in. As soon as you get things on track, something happens that's not in the plan. You'll have to be flexible. Plan to do something relaxing tonight, like taking a long hot bath.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) You may get a chance to arbitrate between two battling friends. No problem. This is a job you do well. You're very objective and fair. You always seek justice, no matter what the consequences. That's why they picked you for this job.

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) This is a very busy day. A lot of folks are pushing their own agenda. You are one of the people in charge of this mess. It's important that you exert your authority. Unless you provide firm leadership, you're going to have a terrible mess on your hands.

AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) Today is hectic. If you and your friends are planning a trip, pay close attention. You could get so caught up in the conversation, you miss the turnoff, with the whole batch of you winding up somewhere you never intended to go. Be aware of your surroundings.

PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) You're very lucky today. Your major woes are in the background. You're confident you can achieve your goals. Start by talking to people who have what you need. Find out what they want that you can provide. That's how a good trade works. Master this skill and the world will be your oyster.

American Express and Jordan National Bank sign a 'point-of-sale' agreement

JORDAN NATIONAL Bank and American Express have signed an agreement under which American Express cardmembers to benefit from the electronic point-of-sale terminals that are being installed at various outlets in Jordan including shops, hotels and car rentals companies.

The launch of this new service to cardmembers is a further recognition of the importance of the Jordanian market to American Express. It will ensure speedy and efficient handling of card transactions for American Express cardmembers as well as for hotels and other retail outlets welcoming the American Express cards.

The point-of-sale terminals are located at the merchant's payment counter and linked through a telephone line to Jordan National Bank's mainframe computer system. This concept and network will ensure speed, simplicity, and security to both cardmembers and merchants welcoming the American Express cards.

"We at the Jordan National Bank are delighted for being the first bank to collaborate with American Express in such an arrangement," said Mr. Nabil Wahbeh, general manager, Jordan branches of the bank.

Mr. Peter Dean, director of finance of American Express, said "this agreement underscores our ongoing commitment to customers in Jordan with the most up-to-date advanced services."

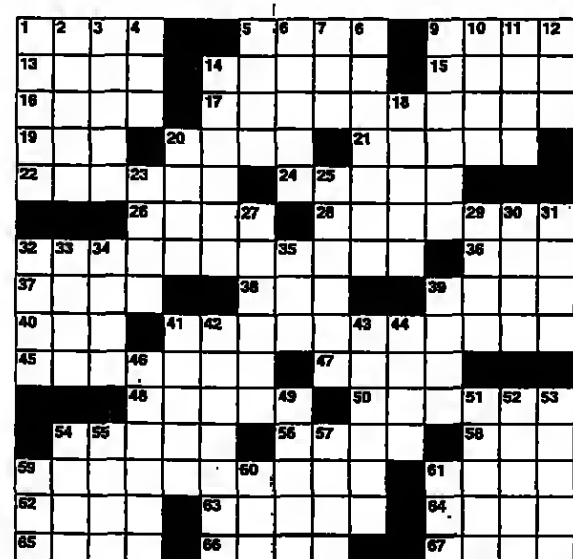
American Express, a diversified travel and financial services company, is a world leader in charge cards, travellers cheques and travel-related services. The Jordanian National Bank, one of the highest capitalised banks in Jordan and the largest acquirer of credit cards, offers a full range of banking and financial services to meet the requirements of individual and business clients. The bank is continuously striving to expand the range of services offered to its customers.



Mr. Nabil Wahbeh, general manager, Jordan branches of the Jordan National Bank (left) and Mr. Peter Dean, director of finance of American Express, sign a point-of-sale agreement which will launch a new service to cardmembers in Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS
1 Husband of Jezebel
5 Hemingway
8 Horse's gait
13 Very small particle
14 Personnel worker
15 Leontine Price role
16 Computer measurement
17 Tolerant
18 Samuel's teacher
20 Doghouse denizen?
21 Command
22 Think back
24 Ear of wheat
26 Courts
32 Devout hermit
32 Keen
37 Reserved
38 Meadow
39 Only
40 Metric unit of area
41 Composed
43 Decorative knotting
47 Auctioneer's last word
48 Lethargic
50 Changes
54 Sub detector
56 Commits a faux pas
58 Piece of mine?
59 Visionary
61 Ontario's neighbor
62 Story start
63 Merits
64 Failed the polygraph
65 Rosary piece
66 Chair part
67 Hitchcock's "The — Vanishes"



by Gayle Waters Dean

Thursday's Puzzle solved:

ACROSS
1 HUSBAND OF JEZEBEL
5 HEMINGWAY
8 HORSE'S GAIT
13 VERY SMALL PARTICLE
14 PERSONNEL WORKER
15 LEONTINE PRICE ROLE
16 COMPUTER MEASUREMENT
17 TOLERANT
18 SAMUEL'S TEACHER
20 DOGHOUSE DENIZEN?
21 COMMAND
22 THINK BACK
24 EAR OF WHEAT
26 COURTS
32 DEVOUT HERMIT
32 KEEN
37 RESERVED
38 MEADOW
39 ONLY
40 METRIC UNIT OF AREA
41 COMPOSED
43 DECORATIVE KNOTTING
47 AUCTIONEER'S LAST WORD
48 LETHARGIC
50 CHANGES
54 SUB DETECTOR
56 COMMITS A FAUX PAS
58 PIECE OF MINE?
59 VISIONARY
61 ONTARIO'S NEIGHBOR
62 STORY START
63 MERITS
64 FAILED THE POLYGRAPH
65 ROSARY PIECE
66 CHAIR PART
67 HITCHCOCK'S "THE — VANISHES"

DOWN
1 FOSSIL RESIN
2 ACCORDING TO —
3 LOFT
4 BUSY TIME
5 PAN'S INSTRUMENT
6 REGIONS
7 WRITE
8 WARDROBE
9 TWO-WHEELED CARRIAGE
10 TRAVEL
11 RIVER TO THE BALIC
12 BIT
14 WITHOUT SUBSTANCE
18 PEEVED
20 BAD PLAY
23 TWISTED
25 FLOWER PARTS
27 SOME TABLEWARE
28 FROSTED
30 RIPPED
31 FIXED ONE'S GAZE ON
32 FAKE
33 ROUND DANCE
34 ACTOR BALDWIN
35 SMALL PEG
38 CONSTRUCTED
41 VERANDA
42 APPEARS
43 SLASHES
44 DESIRE UNDER THE —
46 REMOVED SUDS
49 BRIGHT FISH
51 WATER WHEEL
52 WITHERED
53 SQUALID
54 LUCK
55 KILLER WHALE
57 LANDLORD'S DUE
59 WATCH HOLDER
60 SHAKESPEAREAN
61 PIPE JOINT

Peanuts



Andy Capp



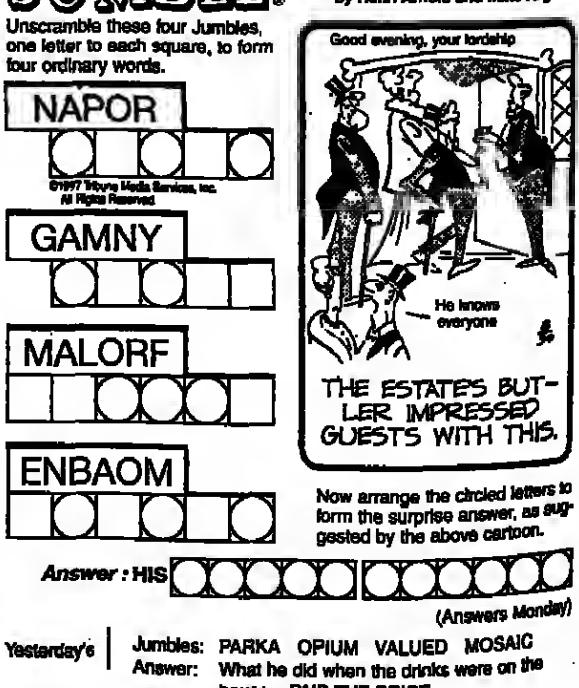
Mutt'n'Jeff

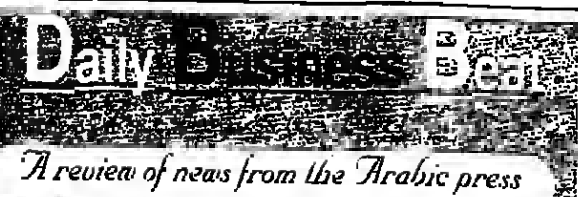


THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME





Halaiah stresses 'quality' to enable Jordanian industry compete, survive

** "IF THE Jordanian industry does not reconsider the issue of quality from now, it will find itself in a very difficult position," Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Halaiah said in a lecture at the Irbid Chamber of Commerce. He emphasised that the first challenge from joining the European partnership is quality which should be given the due care by the Jordanian industry to be able to compete and survive.

Dr. Halaiah indicated that the partnership agreement with Europe will have a direct effect on the private sector which should develop itself from now to be ready for the great competition from the high-quality European products. He stressed that the national industry did not develop itself under the customs protection which was given to it. "It is time now that industries develop especially that in the future, the customs ceiling will not protect the industries," Dr. Halaiah emphasised.

The secretary general highlighted the importance of giving due attention to marketing and promotion operations and to using scientific techniques in packing and packaging. He also expressed the confidence of the Jordanian industry's capability to compete in pricing because of the availability of labour at "acceptable" wages.

"We will have a problem in the local market here and outside markets if we could not compete in pricing and quality," Dr. Halaiah said noting that customs barriers between us and Europe will be abolished upon signing the agreement in its final form on Nov. 24, 1997. He explained that from that time, goods exports to the European Union will be totally exempted from customs fees.

Dr. Halaiah told Irbid's businessmen that the European policy towards the Mediterranean region aims at replacing bilateral cooperation agreements by new accords based on the concept of partnership. He said many Mediterranean countries have signed new partnership agreements and Jordan has recently initiated an accord.

"The partnership accords aim at establishing a European-Mediterranean free trade zone by the year 2010," Dr. Halaiah said noting that such a zone will be the largest international commercial bloc. He added that the agreement is not only an economic accord but a framework for cooperation in all areas including the economy. He described the partnership as a cycle in a chain to merge in the global economy (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

Iraq to continue buying more Jordanian products

BAGHDAD (J.T.) — Jordanian-Iraqi trade cooperation is progressing steadily and Iraq will continue to raise the ceiling of its imports from Jordan, especially drugs, chemical detergents and other commodities in demand by the Iraqi markets, Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh said Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference following talks he held with Jordanian businessmen and representatives of Jordanian Chambers of Industry and Trade, Dr. Saleh said that the Iraqi government has just concluded trade deals for the purchase of \$750 million worth of Jordanian products which will be delivered before the end of 1997. The contracts, he said, are in addition to trade

contracts signed every now and then by the private sectors in the two countries.

Last Saturday, the Amman Chamber of Industry and Trade and the Iraqi chambers of trade and industry announced that they have agreed on increasing the volume of good exchanged between Iraq and Jordan and on paving the way for increased bilateral cooperation in industrial, commercial and investment fields.

Last month, Iraq announced that it has concluded contracts with 35 Jordanian industrial institutions to purchase goods worth more than \$83 million within the framework of the U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal which allows Baghdad to sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil every

six months to buy food and medicine. Dr. Saleh said Iraq is seeking to stimulate trade relations with Arab countries and to attain economic integration among the Arab states.

He indicated that Iraq will continue to reach agreements with other Arab countries in order to suffice the Iraqi markets with their needs.

Criticising the delays by the U.N. Sanctions Committee in approving trade deals, the minister said that such delays contravene the Geneva conventions. He urged the Arab states to support Iraq's legitimate demands and rights and the implementation of the U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal.

Coca-Cola targets bigger Mideast market share

DUBAI (R) — U.S. soft drinks giant Coca-Cola Co., long shunned in the Arab World for doing business with Israel, is targeting a leading share in the Arab market within three years, a senior official said.

Coca-Cola Middle East Division President Sandy Allen said in an interview with an inhouse magazine obtained by Reuters Tuesday that the company's immediate task was to capture 40 per cent of the Middle East business.

"We have to attain critical mass in our key markets. In my book that means over 40 per cent of market share," the magazine, Newline, quoted Mr. Allen as saying.

"I would aim for us to have overall market leadership throughout Northwest Africa, the Near East and the Gulf within three years," he said.

He said the company was focusing on reinforcing its infrastructure and sharpen-

ing the company's competitiveness.

Pepsico built up a dominant share of the Mideast's soft drink business over the past quarter century after Coke was placed on the Arab League's boycott list following the 1967 Israeli-Arab war because of Coke's business in the Jewish state.

But the boycott began to crack in the early 1980s and formally ended after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Coca-Cola has five bottling plants in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — two in Saudi Arabia, one in the United Arab Emirates, one in Kuwait and one in Bahrain.

Figures were not immediately available on Coca-Cola's market share or production in the Arab World. But Mr. Allen said Saudi Arabia's operations alone grew by 16 million cases last year.

Arab Banking Corporation to set up branch in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The biggest Arab Bank will be the first commercial bank to open a branch in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since the UAE stopped licensing new commercial banks in the late 1980s, bankers and newspapers have reported.

The Arab Banking Corporation (ABC), owned by Libya and two other Arab states, has received approval for its plans from the UAE central bank and

will officially inaugurate its office in Abu Dhabi this week, they said.

"According to my information, the central bank has approved ABC's application for opening a branch. There are similar applications by other Arab and non-Arab banks awaiting approval," a UAE banker said.

Newspapers said the Bahrain-based ABC aimed to extend activities to the

UAE and other oil-rich Gulf states to take advantage of a business upswing.

The bank has already boosted its presence in Southeast Asia and other lucrative markets as part of an expansion drive it launched four years ago.

The central bank's approval of ABC's application marked an end to a decision to suspend licences for new commercial banks.

Syrian companies to display goods in Baghdad exhibition

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria said Wednesday that about 365 Syrian companies will take part in a product fair this month in Baghdad following a warming of bilateral ties in May.

The Syrian products on display at the fair from Oct. 24 to 31 will include food items, clothing, refrigerators and air conditioners, the government newspaper Tishrin said.

In July, 38 Syrian medical and pharmaceutical companies exhibited various products in Baghdad and in August, Iraq took part in Damascus's International Fair for the first time since Syria broke off ties with Iraq in 1980.

Relations between the two countries, which are governed by rival branches of the pan-Arab Baath Party, improved in May and the Syrian-Iraqi border was reopened at the beginning of June.

Since then, the two countries have concluded contracts for Iraq to buy Syrian goods under the U.N. oil-for-food agreement which partially lifts the oil embargo slapped on Iraq in 1990 after it invaded Kuwait.

REVLON Launches Colour Silk

ABU SHAKRA Trading Agency, the agent for Revlon in Jordan, has launched the Colour Silk hair colouring.

This unique ammonia-free formula colours the hair without fading with continuous washing, leaving the hair silky, shiny with a beautiful appearance.

It is suitable for ladies between (25-55) years old, who would like to change their original hair colour or would like to cover their grey hair.

Thirty wonderful shades, gradually from the lightest blond to the blackest black — it will certainly match your needs.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 30/09/97 18:55									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7662	0.8202	1.4524	120.87	1.3822	1724.90	1.9890	5.9329
DE Mark	0.5662	-	0.3504	0.8227	68.32	0.7820	976.51	1.1266	3.3601
GB Sterling	1.6125	2.8506	-	2.3427	195.14	2.2288	2783.10	3.2093	9.5727
CH Franc	0.6885	1.2149	0.4261	-	83.02	0.9509	1186.64	1.3684	4.0802
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4634	0.5134	1.2033	-	1.1450	14.28	164.78	4.9128
CA Dollar	0.7235	1.2699	0.4467	1.0477	1.15	-	1243.55	1.4306	4.2626
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0235	0.3591	0.0842	1431.23	0.8008	-	11.52	3.4361
NL Guilder	0.5028	88.71	0.3114	73.02	60.62	0.6946	866.33	-	2.9803
FR Franc	0.1686	0.2977	0.1045	24.4834	20.32	0.2230	33.52	33.5200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.6400	0.3044	3.6725	1537.00	3.3875
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2972	0.5325	5.1412	0.4299	5.1871	2170.90	4.7848
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0812	0.98	409.82	0.9032
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.9485	-	9.86	0.8073	9.74	4077.14	8.9859
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303	-	0.0838	1.01	422.25	0.9306
Kuwait Dinar	3.2857	2.3263	12.3227	1.2388	11.96	-	12.07	5050.11	0.9306
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0208	0.9912	0.0829	-	418.52	0.9224
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4606	2.4401	0.2453	2.3682	0.1980	2.3894	-	2.2040
Egyptian	0.2952	0.2090	1.1071	0.1113	1.0745	0.0888	1.0841	453.73	-


Energy									
Oil	Last	Previous							
Brent	20.25	19.84							
W. Texas	21.19	21.28							
Bonny	20.25	19.84							
Dubai	18.75	18.63							
UL Gas	190.00	190.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY				
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4713	0.1854	0.3878	32.188				
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4813	0.1689	0.3958	32.871				
KW Dinar	0.2857	5.8072	2.0375	4.7755	396.67				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.6882	1.845	3.8565	320.2				
CY Pound	1.9074	3.3681	1.1813	2.7707	230.17				

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Period	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year				
USD	5.50	5.70	5.75	5.80	5.93				
GBP	7.05	7.25	7.40	7.50	7.31				
JPY	0.44	0.44	0.50	0.52	1.53				
DEM	3.09	3.28	3.39	3.52	3.68				
FRF	3.21	3.33	3.44	3.57	3.70				
CHF	1.28	1.50	1.58	1.56	1.78				
ITL	6.56	6.39	6.15	5.87	5.67				

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	332.6	333.1							
Silver (oz's)	5.23	5.25							
Platinum (oz's)	432.5	434.5							
AL (3 Months)	1641	1642							
CU (3 Months)	2144	2148							
Zinc (3 Months)	1350	0							
Lead (3 Months)	643	645							
Ni (3 Months)	6840	0							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	7956.58	-34.87	-0.44	7981.9	7937.4	7981.4		
New York	S&P 500	949.12	-4.22	-0.44	953.95	947.4	953.34		
London	FT-SE 100	5244.2	23.9	0.46	5269.2	5209	5220.3		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	17887.1	-95.5	-0.53	18054	17850	17987		
Paris	CAC 40	3008.28	18.3	0.65	3020.9	3001	2988		
Frankfurt	DAX	4167.85	63.58	1.55	4175.3	4142.7	4104.3		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDANI TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179															
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 30/09/1997															
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JU	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE					
346,000	241,500	ARAB BANK	15.5	1.18	19	640	217620	340.00	338.00	2.00					
N 2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	5	0.00	24	9500	18438	1.92	1.93	0.01					
1,190	890	MID. EAST INV. BK.	64.4	0.00	7	3800	3754	1.99	1.98	-0.01					
2,540	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.9	6.35	8	2400	5991	2.50	2.49	-0.01					
5,200	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.7	3.94	7	1165	5742	4.93	4.93	0.00					
1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	8.1	8.24	36	25100	21069	8.83	8.85	0.02					
3,870	3,450	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	17.3	0.00	1	300	2080	3.55	3.60	0.05					
4,050	3,520	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	3.27	53	60070	22037	3.67	3.67	0.00					
+ 5,150	4,040	ARAB BANKING CO.	18.6	0.00	1	50	193	4.04	3.85	-0.19					
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 241.42	%CHG: -0.43	156	103025	494252
2,300	2,100	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.3	0.00	2	1625	3413	2.15	2.10	-0.05					
2,200	1,820	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.7	5.03	2	2027	4031	1.99	1.99	-					
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 113.95	%CHG: -0.10	4	3652	7444
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.7	5.00	76	40329	81907	2.07	2.00	-0.07					
3,780	1,320	IRSID ELECTRICITY	22.1	3.10	1	50	186	3.78	3.71	-0.07					
1,550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	8	4950	6609	1.35	1.33	-0.02					
1,810	1,480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	26.7	0.00	2	780	153	1.53	1.52	-0.01					
1,790	1,450	MID. EAST KEELS	13.7	0.00	3	11500	14375	1.23	1.21	-0.02					
3,720	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.1	0.00	11	4250	14914	3.50	3.49	-0.01					
1,950	1,640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	275	192	1.70	1.70	-					
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 111.40	%CHG: -0.32	103	62854	118962
4,450	3,220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	25.6	2.89	29	23162	88807	3.88	3.81	-0.07					
11,040	9,070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.5	8.10	3	1006	11047	10.95	10.97	0.02					
3,260	1,620	INDUSTRIAL COMM. BANK	9	0.00	1	500	825	1.65	1.65	-					
4,700	3,040	ARAB PHARM. IND.	12.7	4.35	9	1489	6661	4.62	4.60	-0.01					
5,000	4,000	ARAB CHEM. IND.	19.9	4.25	2	1000	2635	5.00	5.00	0.00					
5,950	4,300	DAR ALDIMA DRUG IND.	14.5	4.24	3	500	2950	5.90	5.90	-					
3,850	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.8	10.12	3	661	1632	2.48	2.47	-0.01					
1,910	1,450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.2	0.00	62	67434	36120	1.55	1.53	-0.02					
1,240	850	ARAB BAKERY COM. TRD.	9	0.00	8	265	228	0.85	0.85	-					
1,420	790	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	2	800	635	1.80	1.80	-					
1,770	1,510	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	16	12750	7293	1.59	1.67	0.02					
1,200	810	INTERMED. REFIN. CHEM.	9	0.00	16	11600	6540	1.58	1.57	-0.01					
1,530	1,200	JOR. ROCKWELL INDUS.	9	0.00	7	3100	2098	1.68	1.68	-					
5,890	530	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM	9	0.00	53	61600	44417	1.70	1.70	-					
1,670	1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	16.7	5.34	6	1780	2297	1.33	1.31	-0.02					
1,400	700	KANTHER INVEST	69.0	0.00	2	600	720	1.40	1.40	-					
1,880	1,080	UNIV. MODN. INDUS.	9	21	8	1550	1924	1.24	1.24	-					
1,460	900	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	12.2	10.99	11	2700	2457	1.91	1.91	-					
1,620	1,300	NATL. CHLORINE	14.8	4.46	2	1500	2465	1.58	1.57	-0.01					
1,810	1,170	JOH. CHEM. CO. DO.	15.6	0.00	1	875	88	1.30	1.30	-					
2,090	1,340	EL -RAY READY WEAR	53.5	0.00	3	650	983	1.50	1.52	0.02					
1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.2	0.00	4	13696	15613	1.13	1.14	0.01					
1,200	860	UNION CH. & YES.	50.5	0.00	9	4500	5050	1.10	1.11	0.01					
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 122.78	%CHG: -0.36	274	218427	246985
GRAND TOTAL											INDEX: 176.21	%CHG: -0.39	537	387958	867643
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 30/09/1997															
N 710	410	MACH. EXP. REPT. MACH.	9	0.00	4	1050	529	1.49	1.51	0.02					
770	770	DAMLIVY/AUCTION 75%	73.9	0.00	59	570406	296311	1.77	1.77	-					
630	380	JOR. TRADE FAIR	12.8	0.00	78	193900	91472	1.46	1.46	0.02					
1,550	1,050	2ARA FOR INVESTMENT	81.3	0.00	1	250	310	1.21	1.24	0.03					
760	660	UNION DIV. SOF.	9	0.00	11	35300	8461	1.73	1.74	0.01					
570	360	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	36	122000	49395	1.41	1.42	0.01					
38,000	29,000	JOR. TOURIST TRAVEL CO	2.4	0.00	3	200	33,000	34.50	34.50	1.65+					
N 950	610	AL-DAMLIVY 75%	72.9	0.00	8	58600	28886	1.76	1.76	-					
480	200	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	2	900	225	1.24	1.25	0.01					
690	490	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	786	786	1.51	1.49	-0.02					
540	440	ARAB TRAD. IND. TRD.	46.1	0.00	10	10800	4320	1.76	1.76	-					
+ 720	390	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	5	10250	3990	1.39	1.38	-0.01					
750	400	NATL. MILIT. ENG. MANICO	9	0.00	16	14614	6137	1.42	1.42	-					
1,810	710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	0.00	4	4500	76	1.50	1.50	-					
580	380	MINDART PHARM. 75%	9	0.00	14	67241	25650	1.61	1.64	0.03					
1,190	860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	18	27950	27118	1.17	1.23	0.06					
+ 320	290	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	11	22200	6882	1.30	1.31	0.01					
1,550	1,050	2ARA FOR INVESTMENT	81.3	0.00	1	250	310	1.21	1.24	0.03					

World Cup qualifiers U.S. vows victory over Jamaica

WASHINGTON (AFP) — For a team struggling to reach next year's World Cup finals, the United States carries a confident, almost arrogant, attitude into Friday's pivotal qualifier here against Jamaica.

U.S. coach Steve Sampson even went so far as to predict a victory.

"I feel good about my team and their mental approach," he said.

"It gives me an enormous amount of confidence about our chances to qualify. They know this is 'crunch time.' This team has the right frame of mind to approach a game they should win and they will win."

The Americans are unbeaten in nine career meetings with Jamaica, winning six and drawing three, including a goal-less result at Kingston in March.

"The small countries mentally are weak. They lack discipline, toughness and tactical awareness," U.S. midfielder Mike Sorber said.

"They were always skilled but never had a chemistry on the field. They have that now but they are still not a better team than the United States. They are playing with a lot of confidence but they are not a better team."

U.S. cockiness also comes from healed injuries to top scorer Eric Wynalda, sweeper Thomas Dooley, midfielder Joe-Max Moore and the return of captain John Harkes from a one-match ban for accumulated yellow cards.

"They play with a bit more spirit and fire, but on the road it will be very difficult for them," Harkes said. "We do have a full side together."

"It's time for us to play with confidence and play aggressively and go after Jamaica. What we need is to put a stamp on the game, not only get the three points but do it in style, show what we can do."

Sampson doubts the Jamaicans' ability to stay with his club, despite the heroics of three British-born stars who have become Jamaican stars — Deon Burton of Derby County and Portsmouth's Paul Hall and Fitzroy Simpson.

"The mentality of the Jamaican team will be to play for a tie and try to steal a win," Sampson said. "If they take

the risk of playing for a win, they take the risk of opening up their team too much and we could exploit them quite severely."

Only three teams will advance to France from the final six in CONCACAF (Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football). Mexico, unbeaten in five matches, is all but certain to qualify.

Jamaica is 3-2 with two drawn for 11 points, level with Mexico atop the group. The U.S. is third at 2-1 with three drawn for nine points, level with El Salvador and one point atop Costa Rica, who have played more matches.

"We don't have the luxury of a tie," Sampson said. "The bottom line is we have to impose our game on them. We have the responsibility of attacking and getting the victory. They don't."

The winner can almost taste the French wine. The loser could go thirsty.

Jamaica's "Reggae Boyz" are trying to be the first Caribbean finalist in the World Cup in 24 years.

They have dropped veteran forward Walter Boyd in favor of English leaguers Hall, who has six goals for his new homeland, and Burton, the lone scorer in 1-0 triumphs earlier this month over Canada and Costa Rica.

"They are comfortable with their back to the goal and quick on the turn," Sampson said. "They have a great combination of speed and technical ability. They are much improved. But so are we."

About 50,000 people are expected to attend, about one-third of them rooting for Jamaica despite a push by Sampson to lure Hispanic-Americans who typically cheer against the U.S. team.

"A very supportive pro-American crowd will drown out the Jamaican fans," Sampson said.

Venables slams British managers

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian manager Terry Venables Tuesday accused British football managers who have complained about losing players to Australia's World Cup preparations of lacking respect.

Walter Smith of Glasgow Rangers and Dave Jones from Southampton have criticised Venables for selecting two of their key players for Australia's friendly against Tunisia in Tunis on Wednesday.

Smith was upset about losing defender Tony Vidmar for his side's UEFA Cup tie against Strasbourg when Venables had excused Aston Villa goalkeeper Mark Bosnich so he could play in the same competition that night against Bordeaux.

"I think they're very unfair," Venables said Tuesday from Tunis.

"I think it's a mark of disrespect to Australia to talk like that."

Venables said he was having more problems keeping players for Australia's matches than he ever did during his two-and-a-half years as England coach.

They let major countries' players go, that's okay, it's a nuisance but that's the way it is," he said. "But when we ask for players, it's a different

story."

Venables said his English first division club Portsmouth had recently had to release two of its Jamaican players for international duty for three weeks.

Australia has not been together since June and the three days in Tunis will be the team's only time with Venables until late November when they square off with the fourth-placed Asian zone team for a World Cup spot.

"I've got one game and that's not enough as it is," Venables said. "I've got to finalise a squad soon."

Venables is already without three key players Wednesday with Glasgow Rangers' Craig Moore, Lazio's Paul Okon and West Ham's Stan Lazaridis forced out of the squad by injury. Venables intends to blood Leeds forward Harry Kewell on the left flank against Tunisia.

Venables said Bosnich was never likely to play in the Tunisia game as he had wanted to have a look at Portsmouth signing Zeljko Kalac, who has been unable to play in England due to work permit problems.

Repairs tie up both teams seeking land speed record

GERLACH, Nevada (AP) — Both teams seeking the world land speed record are hunkered under their cars, looking for ways to make them go faster safely.

For the British thrust SSC crew, it's a matter of tweaking problems that cropped up in Thursday's 714.144 mph (1,142.63 kmph) dash, 81 mph (130 kmph) faster than the old mark set here nearly 14 years ago.

On the American side, the quest is to get the spirit of America to run faster than 400 mph (640 kmph), a goal that hasn't been met so far this year.

Neither team plans another sprint across the desert before Wednesday.

Royal Air Force fighter Pilot Andy Green gunned thrust to a record that crushed the one previously held by his boss, Richard Noble, who now heads the effort.

He is attempting to become the first driver to surpass the speed of sound, which would be 750-765 mph (1,200-1,224 kmph) here depending on weather conditions.

Craig Breedlove's

spokeswoman, Cherie Danson, said the American team is trying to overcome a handling problem.

"We discovered there was dirt collecting on the front part of the wheels and that was causing the vibration," she said.

Breedlove, 60, held the speed record five times in the mid-1960s and was the first person to drive 400 mph (640 kmph), 500 mph (800 kmph) and 600 mph (960 kmph).

He has issued another plea for help from corporate sponsors, saying a lack of financing threatens his bid to return the record to America.

Noble, 51, also said he is running low on cash and his goal of Mach 1 probably has to be reached this year because it's unlikely he will find sponsorship for another campaign in Nevada.

He said the Black Rock Desert is the only place he has found in a worldwide search that's suitable for a supersonic run.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Renault top man for Prost

PARIS (AFP) — Bernard Dudot, Renault's technical director, will join Alain Prost's Grand Prix team next season when the French car maker pulls out of Formula One motor racing. Dudot, 58, will co-ordinate all development work but Loic Bigois stays in charge of designing the new AP01 (Alain Prost 01) which will be powered by Peugeot next season, Prost said Tuesday. Dudot was Prost's track engineer when the four-times world champion was at Renault in 1981-83. Dudot, who helped bring the turbo-powered Renault into Formula One in 1977, was one of the main architects of Renault engine's 95 Grand Prix wins. Dudot's hopes of finishing at Renault on a high note were boosted by Canadian Jacques Villeneuve, who drove his Williams Renault to victory in the Luxembourg Grand Prix on Sunday to take a firm option on what would be Renault's sixth world championship.

Schumacher brothers OK

BONN (AFP) — Ralf Schumacher, who shunted his brother Michael out of Sunday's Luxembourg Grand Prix and probably lost him the 1997 world championship, does not believe he has to say sorry. "It's doubly bitter for him but he doesn't blame me, and why should he?" the younger Schumacher told the Bild daily. The Jordan driver did not believe he should say sorry. "There's no reason to do so. There were three of us involved in that accident — (Giancarlo) Fisichella, Michael and me. It was just one of those things. I didn't have a chance. Fisichella nudged my rear wheel and I went over Michael. If everybody had been paying attention nothing would have happened." "What should I do, brake simply because I'm Michael's brother. I have to drive my own race. I'm not the third Ferrari driver," he added. Bild reports that when Canadian Jacques Villeneuve bumped into Ralf Schumacher after winning to take a nine point lead in the championship, he said: "Thanks for the points."

Chavez operation delays fight

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Julio Cesar Chavez, due to have an operation on his elbow on Tuesday, has been forced to postpone his WBC light welterweight title fight against fellow Mexican Miguel Angel Gonzalez to January. The two men were due to have fought for the title left vacant by American Oscar de la Hoya on Oct 25. WBC president Jose Sulaiman said if Chavez could not meet the 90-day delay then another challenger would be named from Argentina's Ismael Chaves, Australia's Constantin Tszyu and Mexico's Rafael Ruelas. The world championship between WBC straw-weight champion Ricardo Lopez of Mexico and Nicaragua's WBA champion Rosendo Alvarez, on the same bill as the Chavez-Gonzalez fight, may now be held at Las Vegas on Nov 8, when Evander Holyfield defends his WBA heavyweight title against fellow American Michael Moore.

Boro eye Wimbledon ace

MIDDLESBROUGH (AFP) — Middlesbrough have targeted Wimbledon striker Dean Holdsworth as the man to spearhead their First Division promotion challenge following the recent departure of Fabrizio Ravanelli. Manager Bryan Robson has confirmed he has made a bid for a player who has failed to command a regular place at Wimbledon this season. Italian striker Fabrizio Ravanelli joined Marseille in a French record 5.3 million pound (\$8.5 million) move last week, leaving Robson's side short of quality firepower. Robson refused to disclose the size of his bid but added: "The next move is up to Wimbledon."

Elber tolerates pain

BONN (AFP) — Bayern's lead striker Giovanni Elber will bite through the pain of an ankle injury however Italian striker partner Ruggiero Rizzitelli will be absent for their Champions League match against Gothenburg on Wednesday because of torn ankle muscles. Erratic midfielder Mario Basler, one of German football's most colourful characters, will return for the Gothenburg group E game after a hurt calf kept him out of the Schalke game. It will be up to coach Giovanni Trapattoni however to decide whether he will play the full 90 minutes or enter the game in Stockholm from the substitute's bench. Dieter Hamann, who has missed Bayern's last four matches because of suspension, will also retake his place in the Bayern line up. French international Bixente Lizarazu is causing the club more long term problems because of a nagging groin strain. A decision will be made in the next few days as to whether he will require an operation.

Injury forces Miller competition

SYDNEY (AFP) — Olympic silver medalist Scott Miller is ineligible for next year's world swimming championships in Perth after injury forced him out of next week's selection trials in Brisbane. Miller was second behind Russian world recordholder Denis Pankratov in the 100 metre butterfly at last year's Atlanta Olympics, but he has been subsequently troubled by a persistent shoulder injury. Australian Swimming spokesman Ian Hanson confirmed here Tuesday that 22-year-old Miller had pulled out of the trials, thereby ruling him out of next January's world titles in Perth. Miller has not contested a major international meet since Atlanta, missing the world short-course titles in Sweden in April and the Pan Pacific championships in Japan in August. Hanson said Miller would now prepare for the World Cup in Sydney in late January and next year's Commonwealth Games trials in late April. Miller has had a tumultuous year after being kicked out of the Australian Institute of Sport in June for missing too many training sessions. The Sydney swimmer remains the world's second fastest 100m butterfly exponent behind Pankratov with his 52.53s in Atlanta.

Dortmund in crisis

BONN (AFP) — They may be the reigning European Cup holders but Borussia Dortmund are in a state of crisis after eight Bundesliga matches which have left them as second rate stragglers in 12th position.

They light only light in the tunnel has been the 1-0 win over Galatasaray Istanbul a fortnight ago in the opening round of their Champions' League defence.

Dortmund host Sparta Prague on Wednesday in Group A in an attempt for more international success as a diversion from the troubles at home.

"We will try everything we can to free the players as soon as possible but we're also working on every department," Scala said who has been sarcastically dubbed 'Dr Scala' for forcing big gun trio Mathias Sammer, Andreas Moller and Stefan Reuter to return from injury for last week's second round of the German Cup.

Sammer in particular was annoyed and has kept away from journalists for fear of venting any public criticism of Scala. Dortmund fans jeered their heroes Saturday after going down 2-3 to 1860 Munich and alarm bells have begun to ring. "We have to turn things around now," president Gerd Niebaum said.

"If we don't manage it in October things will get tough. December will be the time to take stock." On Wednesday evening at least trainer Scala will have the services of central defender Jurgen Kohler again who has recovered from the flu.

The 21-year-old Lars Ricken is likely to miss the trip however because of a thigh muscle problem. Defender Martin Kree is definitely out — he tore a leg muscle on Saturday.



Boxing heavyweight contender Andrew Golota works out in Times Square in New York at an event to promote his upcoming World Boxing Council match with champion Lennox Lewis. The October 4 fight will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey (Reuters photo)

Zamorano to miss Chile's World Cup qualifier

MILAN (AFP) — Chile's hopes of reaching the 1998 World Cup finals suffered a bodyblow on Tuesday, when Inter Milan said that striker Ivan Zamorano would be out for a month through injury.

Zamorano pulled a calf muscle in his right leg as he took a penalty at the end of a training

session in Switzerland on Monday evening. The team had been preparing for Tuesday night's UEFA Cup tie with Neuchatel Xamax.

Hospital tests in Neuchatel on Tuesday indicated he will have to rest for two weeks and will not be match fit for another two weeks after that.

A setback for Inter Milan, who are currently top of the Serie A and looking to book their place in the second round of the UEFA Cup, the injury is a bodyblow for Chile.

The national team must beat Peru in Santiago on October 12 to stand a chance of taking South America's fourth and final slot in

the 1998 World Cup finals. Argentina, Colombia and Paraguay have already qualified.

Though he cannot play, Zamorano still intends to fly back to Chile on Wednesday as planned, to give the team moral support.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 64144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 079 3340	CINEMA TEL: 079 3340	Elsam Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	
	Bruce Willis...in	Paul Hogan...in	Curt Russel...in	CONCORD "1" Hugh Grant & Mr. Bean...in	ABDOUN John Travolta & Nicolas Cage...in	ABDOUN Julia Roberts...in	Watch out for the new play THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas
	THE FIFTH ELEMENT	FLIPPER	CAPTAIN RON	FOUR WEDDINGS & A FUNERAL	FACE OFF	MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING	
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	(12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30) CONCORD "2" MONKEY TROUBLE	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	
				Shows: 3:30, 5:45 only			

84 civilians slaughtered in Algeria — hospitals

ALGIERS (AP) — Armed attackers cut off the head of a baby while slaughtering 52 family members and killed 32 others in five separate attacks in Algeria, hospital sources and witnesses said Tuesday.

The latest round of carnage followed bloody weekend attacks, including the death of 11 teachers who were slain while their students watched in horror.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks in the suburbs of Algiers, near the town of Blida about 50 kilometres south of the capital and near the Moroccan border.

The bodies of most of the victims — many of them children — were mutilated and then burned, said hospital sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisals.

The first massacre took place late Saturday night in the Sidi El Kebir suburb just north of Algiers. The circumstances of the killings were not immediately known, but eight people were killed and their bodies buried Monday.

In the same neighbourhood, Sunday night, attackers with swords killed 10 construction workers while they were sleeping, and injured three others.

Shortly after, and a kilometre

away in the neighbourhood of Sidi Youssef, attackers disguised as police slit the throats of a couple and their two daughters, and kidnapped three young women.

At about the same time, in Chebil, near Blida, some 15 armed men slit the throats or cut the heads off 52 members of a family — including 10 children — who lived in five adjacent houses, and kidnapped five other young women.

The attack came two days after the extended Ferhah family had moved back to Chebil. They had fled the town at the beginning of the year to escape a previous massacre.

The Ferhah family's murderers decapitated at least one baby, throwing its head on the roof and its body in a kitchen stove, said witnesses who came to Algiers Tuesday and also spoke on condition of anonymity.

The same night, in the town of Tlemcen, near the Moroccan border, attackers armed with sharp-edged weapons killed 10 people, and three small bombs went off, causing minor injuries.

Algerian media Tuesday said 84 militants had been killed in the week-long government offensive against the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's most violent insurgent faction.

Diplomats say Saudis mediating in Algeria

DUBAI (AFP) — Algerian President Liamine Zouari is expected next week in Saudi Arabia, which is leading a secret mediation between Algeria's government and Islamist rebels, Arab diplomats said Tuesday.

One diplomat said Saudi efforts led to the Sept. 21 announcement by the Islamic Salvation Army, the armed wing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), of a ceasefire from Oct. 1 in the violence-ravaged country.

An Algerian diplomat in Riyadh said Mr. Zouari will make an official two-day visit to Saudi Arabia next week, but did not give any dates or details of his programme.

Another diplomat said a senior Saudi security official has been conducting a mediation effort over the past few weeks between Mr. Zouari's secular government and the FIS to end five years of bloodshed in the north African country.

The official made several visits to Algeria between the end of August

and the beginning of September to persuade the warring parties to lay down their arms and instead opt for dialogue, the diplomat added.

Algeria's civil war began in 1992 after the military intervened to keep the FIS from certain electoral victory and has claimed an estimated 60,000 lives.

In a statement announcing the ceasefire, the FIS urged the warring parties in Algeria to "declare a truce, unilaterally if they have to," and an amnesty for "those who have taken up arms."

But newspaper reports said Tuesday that at least 67 people were killed as four new massacres were added to the litany of Algerian slaughter linked with the Islamic extremist insurrection.

The government blames much of the recent violence on one of the most radical of the extremist groups, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which has threatened attacks against the United Nations if it interferes in the conflict.



A soldier waves incense in front of Her Majesty Queen Noor during her visit to Zarqa Tuesday. The Queen accompanied His Majesty King Hussein on the visit to the governorate as part of their visits across the Kingdom, in which the King updates the citizens on Jordan's current policies and listens to their requests (See story on page 1) (Reuters photo)

Jospin says policy on Algeria a security issue

PARIS (R) — Prime Minister Lionel Jospin said Monday the safety of the French public, target of Algerian Muslim fundamentalist bombings in 1995-1996, should govern France's policy towards its former North African colony.

"We are obliged to remain rather careful...because we have to think of the French public which has already been hit," Mr. Jospin told a television interviewer who asked about France's policy towards Algeria.

"I want us to take our responsibilities but we must think of the French population which must be protected," Mr. Jospin told TF1 Television.

Mr. Jospin was referring to the 1995-96 bombings in France which killed 12 people and wounded about 200.

Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA) claimed responsibility for most of the attacks, saying they were in reprisal for what French support for that country's military-dominated government.

France's government has however come under increasing pressure from domestic left-wingers in recent weeks,

including in Mr. Jospin's own socialist party, to act in favour of Algerian civilians, victims of massacres attributed by Algerian leaders to fundamentalist guerrillas.

Mr. Jospin said there is "a very great difficulty" in understanding exactly what was happening in Algeria.

"What we see is awful terror and scandalous violence against civilians. But it is extremely difficult to identify what is happening."

"This is not Chile during the rule of (General Augusto) Pinochet where democrats were fighting dictatorial rule. Here we have a fanatical and violent opposition fighting against authorities who themselves, to a certain extent, use violence and the state power," Mr. Jospin said.

He added that France would be more generous in handing out visas to Algerians whose lives were threatened in their country.

Authorities are now preparing a change in immigration laws which would grant political refugee status to all those under threat for their political stance and not only those threatened by governments.

Egypt braces for violence ahead of land reform law

MINYA (AFP) — Egypt has beefed up security around farmlands on the Nile ahead of the implementation of a contentious agricultural reform law which could push one million peasants off land they have farmed for years.

The law, which goes into effect Wednesday, will allow landlords to raise rents for the first time since the 1950s and evict rebel tenants.

It was passed in 1992 with a five-year grace period, dealing a powerful blow to one of the most important foundations of the 1952 revolution and contributing to Egypt's push towards a market economy.

Government officials insisted that 90 per cent of land-lord-tenant problems were resolved but Prime Minister Kamal Ganzari will chair a meeting over the next 48 hours to evaluate the situation.

"If 90 per cent of the problems have been resolved this means that the situation of 100,000 tenants is still hanging," said Karam Saber, director of the Land Centre for Human Rights, a group set up in December to defend farmers.

"We hope the security forces will be wise enough to stay out of any confrontation between tenants and landlords otherwise there will be huge problems which we cannot even foresee," Mr. Saber said.

In the provinces of Minya, Beni Suef and Assiut, hundreds of army conscripts joined police units to patrol villages in armoured vehicles.

Security officials and governors "held several meetings in the last few days to coordinate their efforts and prepare for any eventual outbreak of violence," a police officer said.

"The authorities fear that Islamic militants entrenched in southern Egypt will take advantage of peasant unrest to carry out terrorist attacks," the police officer said.

In July tenant-farmers in Minya and Al Ataf went on the rampage, destroying private and public property belonging to the agriculture ministry as landowners began registering their property with the authorities.

"There is no doubt that something will happen on

Oct. 2 but it seems that throughout this summer many landlords and tenants agreed on new rents," said Francois Ireton of the French research centre CEDEF.

Mr. Ireton, who has conducted interviews with landlords and tenants in Egypt's fertile northern Delta region said those who have lived side by side for years prefer that there is no change.

"Many of the tenants I interviewed said they preferred a rise (in rent) than be driven out of the land and landlords appear to be more comfortable dealing with a tenant they know than with a newcomer," Mr. Ireton said.

Mr. Ireton said he expected "urban landlords" who live far from their land to "wait and see what will happen with the others."

One such landlord with six faddans in the Delta province of Dahaghiya admitted that he belonged to this category: "We want our tenant out but we have not confronted him and he has not spoken to us."

"We are not in a hurry. We've waited 10 years and we will continue to wait to get a good price for our land. There are too many people wanting to sell and prices are dropping," the landlord said.

Sayed Abdul Hamid from Benin Ahmad village in Minya said his landlord ordered him to evacuate the land Wednesday.

"We cleared all the cotton after the owner ordered us to hand over the land on Oct 1. I don't know how my family and I will live now," he said.

Landlord Mahmoud Ismail from the village of Abgag in Minya said he was willing to continue renting his property to farmers "since it is clear now that I can decide at any time what to do with the land."

The rent liberalisation law undoes legislation adopted at the height of the 1952 revolution which confiscated huge masses of land from landlords and gave tenants security over rented land at low prices.

Confrontations between tenants and landlords since January have left 15 people dead, 238 wounded while 822 were arrested, including 182 who are still behind bars, according to the Land Centre and an Agence France Presse count.

European deputies to urge EU not to ratify pact with Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Two European human rights activists said on Tuesday they would urge the European Union (EU) not to ratify a cooperation agreement with Israel so long as it violated Palestinian human rights.

Members of the European Parliament Pierre Pradier and Michel Tubiana last week toured Palestinian areas as part of a delegation of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), a non-governmental organisation with official observer status with the U.N. and the EU.

EU MP Pradier said the EU-Israel association agreement involving trade, educational, industrial and cultural cooperation would be up soon for ratification.

"There is still time for the organisations defending human rights in Europe and

Israel and Palestine to remind the European States that there is a connection between the agreement and the respect for human rights," Mr. Pradier told a news conference in Arab east Jerusalem.

"There is a clause which says that the agreement could be interrupted if severe and continuous Israeli human rights abuses persist," he said.

"If human rights organisations apply pressure on this issue the governments will be pressured to take action."

FIDH accused Israel of violating Palestinian rights and said the Israel's hardline policies would lead to violent confrontation.

It said Israel subjected the whole Palestinian population to "collective punishment" by imposing closures since the first PLO-Israeli peace deals were signed in 1993.

"The permanent obstacles, the arbitrary attitudes vis-à-vis liberty of movement of a whole population from the basic citizen to the member of the Palestinian National Authority are significant signs of an explicit desire to harass and provoke on the part of the present Israeli government," Mr. Pradier said.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip before the PLO-Israeli peace deals were implemented in 1994. The closures were tightened following bombings that killed scores of Israelis since the deals. The closures were eased but never lifted.

Israel says the closures were imposed for security reasons, but Palestinians call it a collective punishment, barring tens of thousands of Palestinians from jobs in Israel and hurting the already ailing Palestinian economy.

Israel's longest held Palestinian has little hope of freedom soon

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Ahmad Qattamesh holds the unenviable record as Israel's longest held "administrative detainee" — and after five years in prison without trial he has little hope of a quick end to his plight.

"His most recent detention order expires on October 19, but it will probably be extended again, for the 10th time in a row," Qattamesh's wife Suha Barghouti told Agence France Presse at the couple's home in Ramallah.

Qattamesh, 45, was arrested on September 1992 on suspicion of assisting an illegal organisation and has since been held for repeated six-month periods under emergency "administrative detention" statutes inherited from British authorities who ruled Palestine prior to the creation of Israel in 1948.

No formal charges have been filed against Qattamesh, whom Israeli authorities suspect of being a senior figure in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a leftist group opposed to peace accords with Israel.

Ms. Barghouti said the military tribunals who handle the cases of administrative detainees have been unable to link her husband to any specific anti-Israeli actions and thus cannot bring him to court.

Qattamesh's release has twice been ordered, once by the Israeli supreme court in December 1992 and again in October 1993 by a military judge, but each decision was ignored by the army, citing unspecified new information on his activities.

As in all cases concerning administrative detention, the alleged evidence against suspects is classified and is not made available to detainees or their lawyers.

A year ago, Israeli authorities barred Ms. Barghouti from visiting her husband at Megiddo prison in northern Israel on the grounds that she allegedly smuggled notes out of prison which were later compiled into a book about his treatment in jail.

According to his lawyers, Qattamesh underwent 100 days of interrogation, during which he was severely tortured.

Now only his daughter, Hanin, 8, is authorised to visit him thanks to intervention by the International Red Cross.

Ms. Barghouti insists that the only reason Israel insists on maintaining her husband in jail is to "break his will, his belief in the Palestinians' right to create an independent state."

"But he told me that even if he remains in prison, he won't give up his convictions," she

said. Ms. Barghouti, with the support of Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups, has turned to international public opinion in an effort to force Israel to put an end to its use of administrative detention.

In a recently released report titled "Prisoners of Peace," the Israeli rights group B'Tselem said that since the first Israel-PLO agreements were signed in September 1993, Israel has held more than 800 Palestinians under administrative detention for periods ranging from two months to five years.

The Palestinian prisoner rights group Al Dhamir said the number of detainees rose from around 250 in July to some 700 after Israel launched a vast crackdown on Islamists following the two Jerusalem bombings.

Israel defends administrative detention as necessary in cases where Palestinians are suspected of involvement in carrying out or planning terrorist attacks but where evidence cannot be presented in court because it would put Israeli agents at risk.

Critics say the army uses the administrative detention because it is unable to present any evidence against the suspect.

Schwarzenegger becomes a father

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Arnold Schwarzenegger and wife Maria Shriver announced the birth of their fourth child — a bouncing 4.3-kilogramme baby boy. He was born Saturday at an area hospital, said a spokeswoman for the Hollywood action star. Schwarzenegger was at Shriver's bedside when she gave birth. Mother and baby are fine and are resting, Catherine Olim added.

Hoffman reveals secret wish

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — "You know what my secret wish is," actor Dustin Hoffman told reporters. "I haven't told this to many people, but I've always had a secret wish to play those really good looking guys." Hoffman, who worked in an upcoming movie co-starring John Travolta, beamed a large, fake smile and added: "I would really like to play the roles that Tom Cruise gets, I mean after all I'm more handsome and more muscular."

Willis lives out role during remake 'The Day of The Jackal'

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — During the filming of the remake of "The Day of The Jackal," Bruce Willis took his role as the master of disguises to heart. Ignoring the advice of colleagues and agents, he walked out into the street without a bodyguard and tried but failed to hang out like one of the guys. In "The Jackal," directed by Michael Caton-Jones, the master assassin, played by Willis, must disguise himself in order to get away from his rival Richard Gere, who is working for the government. Extensive make-up helped him walk around without being recognised, even among the cast and crew. But once he got out into the street, it didn't take long for someone to see through his disguise, sending Willis scurrying back to the safety of the studio.

French rapper rapped

PARIS (AFP) — A French rap artist known as Tonton David (Uncle David) was fined \$800 Tuesday for insulting police and trying to avoid arrest after a late-night car chase. The rapper refused to take an alcohol test following the August 17 chase in which police saw him and his chauffeur repeatedly shunting a Citroen car which he said had hit his vehicle. Arresting officers said the pair were highly abusive and struggled before they were arrested. The dreadlocked 30-year-old musician, whose real name is David Grammont, admitted that the pair had drunk wine and champagne. But he said the other driver should have been arrested instead.

Ahern voted in as Ireland's best dressed man

DUBLIN (AFP) — Bertie Ahern's flair has always been more political than sartorial, but the Irish prime minister has undergone a makeover — women parliamentary colleagues have voted him Ireland's best-dressed man. Ahern, never known to wear a suit where a plain old anorak would do, has revealed a previously hidden passion for power dressing since becoming premier in June. Ireland's 26 women MPs were duly impressed, and dressed for the part in an Irish-made suit, Ahern accepted his \$3,750 prize, which will go to charity.

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